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Baptist Principles

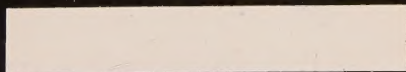
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THE
BAPTIST PRINCIPLE

IN APPLICATION TO
BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

BY
WILLIAM CLEAVER WILKINSON, D.D.

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE "new and enlarged edition" of "The Baptist Principle" starts on a fresh career one of the most important discussions of the theme ever published for our denomination. The destruction of the plates by the fire of 1896 compelled the resetting of the entire work. Opportunity has been thus afforded to the author for the making of some needed corrections and for the incorporation of such emendations as he has deemed desirable.

The author has also taken advantage of this to append new matter to the extent of nearly one-half that of the earlier volume. This will greatly enhance the value of the book and will justify the slightly increased price at which it must be sold.

The commendations found at the end of the volume will eloquently show how it was at first received. The publishers fully believe that in this revised and expanded form it will have a still warmer reception and enter upon a still more effective service.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

I WAS asked recently by an intelligent and thoughtful gentleman who had just been reading the present volume in its first edition, "Do you still hold the opinions here expressed exactly as you here express them?" I felt that there was not only curiosity, but some doubt, and even perhaps a hint of courteous negative conjecture, conveyed in the manner in which the question was asked. This new edition of the book, appearing with its original substance unmodified, but with its volume considerably increased by added matter, all of it in the same tone and tenor, may be taken as the author's answer to the question so proposed to him. I have re-read with care every sentence in the work, without feeling at any point any occasion to abate or to alter, except perhaps in here and there a turn of expression, what I found set down in its pages.

I am indeed vividly sensible of a sort of atmospheric change in the religious conditions that now exist, from those that existed when this book was first published. There is less readiness now than there was then, to listen patiently when the idea of implicit submission to outward authority in relig-

ion is insisted on. But in the opinion of the present writer, such insistence is not less, but only more, necessary on that account ; and, for his own part, he feels bound still to keep up the full tension of his insistence accordingly.

The chapters composing the present volume have a history both inward and outward, which I yield to a sense of duty in briefly telling. The book itself is now no longer complete without the history.

The principle of obedience to Christ, made so much of in the following pages, might very well seem to have been erected by the writer into this prominence, primarily for the sake of the particular argument which it here proves to yield in such remarkable force and abundance. Such, however, is far enough from being the fact. The application made of the principle to the case actually in hand, is a distinctly subsequent thought on the writer's part, springing out of a certain personal experience of his own that at the moment of its occurring had not the least consciously perceived, or even remotely imagined, relation to the subject of the present discussion. The experience thus referred to may perhaps best be described by the quotation of a few paragraphs from an address not long since delivered by the writer before a mixed audience of professors and students in the chapel of the University of Chicago :

“ It happened to me once, no matter when, but it was at a capital crisis of my career, to conceive as

I never had done before the idea of making the whole course of my conduct, outward and inward, in every act of it, little or great, one continuous unbroken campaign of conscious, intentional, resolute obedience to God. I do not now quite mean that I then instantly, abruptly, formed the purpose of actually doing this. I mean that I then first vividly conceived the idea of such a thing. The idea as it arose in my mind was indeed extraordinarily definite and commanding. It was not at all the idea of being good, of doing right. It was not at all the idea of fulfilling the highest possible end of my existence. It was not at all the idea of living nobly ; living worthily of myself. It was not at all the idea of conforming to the dictates of my conscience, of doing duty because it was duty.

“In contrast to all these things, the idea was one of obedience ; obedience, not dignified compliance, but obedience, absolute, humble, unquestioning, implicit, rendered to a person, and that person God. Nothing could exceed the definiteness, the vividness, the intense, the incandescent vividness, of this idea as I then conceived it.

“So far, it was a simple intellectual experience, an experience in which the imagination had some part, but in which the conscience, the will, had none. It was a revelation in the sphere of my mind, a revelation to startle, and it did startle me—not with terror, nor with any impulse of recoil before it. Instead, there was twin-born with the conception, the intellectual conception itself of the

idea, a movement of the spiritual nature, of the conscience and the will, to make the idea a reality of life. I embraced it as my law. The mere thought ceased to be a mere thought, and became a living, an all-mastering, purpose of my soul.

“I need to make the idea of which I thus speak, that is, the intellectual idea transformed at that moment into a practical regulative law of life, still more sharply definite than I have yet done. This idea was the idea of obeying God, not as I might speculatively represent God to myself according to my own best interior light, but as he had represented himself in that self-revelation of his to be found in the collection of writings which we call the Bible. I had no question then, as I have no question now, that however much God reveals himself in the secret of the soul of man, in the volume of the created universe, in the solemn process of history, he has chosen to give us the key of all, so far as the conduct of life is concerned, chiefly in the Old Testament and the New Testament Scriptures.

“My new idea, my new accepted law of life, was very simple, very humble. It was just to undertake doing and being altogether what I was told to do and to be in the Bible, and this as a matter of constant, conscious, personal obedience rendered to a personal God.

“I immediately discovered two very vital things. One was that God would have me honor the Son, that is, Jesus Christ, even as I honored himself, the Father. The other was that the Bible was a mar-

velous manual of life. The number, the variety, the interdependence, the endlessly unfolding adapt-
edness, the practical sufficiency, inexhaustible, of the particular instructions or precepts into which the great orb or sphere of the Divine Will was analyzed and broken up for our use in the Old and New Testaments, astonished and delighted me. To these all I was to say, and I did say, 'Amen, I will fulfill them.'

"This was in no overweening conceit of my ability to accomplish the obedience I attempted. I was simply rendering the joyful answer of a convinced conscience and a ready will.

"In every one of the requirements that I thus found, I recognized an expression of the will, that is, the character, the living personality, of Christ himself, the express image of God. In each separate act of obedience, my will met Christ's will, and as in a spotless mirror he revealed himself to me. I learned that there was no alternative way conceivable in which one being could so intimately reveal himself to another as by unfolding to that other for that other's response in obedience continually more and more of his will. For one's will is one's self. There is no limit to the degree to which it is possible for Christ thus to make revelations of himself, no limit, except that which we ourselves set in limiting the degree of our obedience.

"I have thus arrived, and I have thus brought you who have followed me, to arrive, by a way of approach somewhat different from that which

Christ's first disciples obliged the Master himself to take, at the self-same principle which he laid down as governing his own promised posthumous manifestation of himself to believers. Jesus said : 'If a man love me, he will keep my word ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.' To this transcendent experience of divine communion there is no antecedent condition necessary for any soul, except the one condition of obedience. But obedience there must be, obedience to a personal Lord. 'If a man love me, he will keep my word' ; and then the infinitely blessed consequence follows as a matter of course. God abides with you ; nay, for such is the sublime, the awful claim of partnership made for himself by that unique man, Christ Jesus, '*We* will come unto you and make our abode with you.'"

"No matter when," I said to that audience in the University chapel. But to the different audience consisting of such readers as this book is likely to find, it will be fit enough for me to say that the intellectual and spiritual crisis thus described occurred when I stood on the imminent brink of induction into the solemn duties and responsibilities of my first Christian pastorate ; it was in fact at the moment immediately preceding my ordination to the ministry of the gospel. I took up my pastoral work, as I took up the problem of my own individual religious experience, in the spirit of an indescribably

real and vivid practical daily obedience to Christ. What I taught from the pulpit, what I taught from house to house, was the same that I tried to practise in my own heart and my own life, namely, endless conscious obedience, joyfully rendered, in things little and things great, to Jesus Christ as rightful sovereign of the soul, worthy of all love and all worship from all men.

I made no exception whatever, and therefore I made no exception of Christ's two commands, "Be baptized," "Do this in remembrance of me." Cases were incessantly arising of persons brought to their first act of conscious personal obedience to Christ in repenting of their sins and turning to him for salvation. It was perfectly instinctive for one whose whole business in the world had resolved itself into bringing about obedience everywhere in all things to Jesus, to say to such persons, "Now you have obeyed Christ in repenting, what act of obedience to him stands next in order?" There was nothing else so vital as keeping souls in ceaseless living relation to Christ—the right relation of painstaking affectionate obedience. "Well, what *is* the next thing?" was very likely the inquiry in response. But the only rejoinder would be, "Find it yourself in the New Testament." The result was invariable, as it was inevitable. There the next thing was, in plain words, "Repent and be baptized." It never failed to prove a fresh vivific touch to the very quick of the soul in a convert, to meet this word and obey it. But the campaign of

obedience was thus barely begun. The principle had had its first application ; that was all.

Such is the true history of the present argument—that is, what I may call the inward history of it. The outward history may be indicated in a few hints.

I had observed in the “Independent” occasional contributed articles in defense or in praise of various denominations of Christians ; but none such on behalf of Baptists. I wrote to the editor asking, “Why not once in a while admit to your columns a good word for Baptists, along with the rest ?” His reply was characteristic, at once of himself the man, and of the paper, under whatever editorship : “We shall very gladly publish anything you may care to write of the nature indicated.” I waited only for a suitable occasion, and I wrote what stands as one of the chapters of the present book for my first article.

Chiefly no doubt because the article was opportune at the moment, it arrested public attention and elicited comment in various quarters. From time to time other articles followed, all of them pressing the argument for Baptist views drawn from the principle of obedience to Christ. Many letters elicited by these articles came to the writer, some of them favorable, some unfavorable, to his purpose and contention, but all of them in one way or another helpful to his work. A specimen extract or two from such correspondence will be encountered in the body of the present volume. The editor of the

"Independent" too received many letters, most of them letters of protest ; with these there were some volunteer articles of reply to the argument. Of such articles few or none were published ; and, so far as outside contributors were concerned, the present writer had the field pretty much to himself. The editor indeed, as in loyalty bound, printed now and then a pungent editorial note in reply to his contributor ; or rather, perhaps it should be said, in parry and avoidance of his contributor's argument. To such points urged against him the contributor of course made no allusion in his articles still following ; for what he himself aimed at, and what the "Independent" approved, was discussion without controversy.

The generous courage of the "Independent" faced steadily the growing outcry against its course in publishing such articles, and it continued to publish them. One gentleman, the editor told me, complaining in person of the "Independent's" policy in the matter said, "If you would only publish replies !" "We get many proffered replies, but none suitable to publish," was the response ; "nothing would please us better than to receive such ; you give us one." The gentleman thus appealed to was one of the foremost divines in the country. He did not take up the championship to which he was challenged, and nothing to meet the demand was forthcoming from any quarter.

The editor himself in one instance entered the lists, and published a witty editorial article in fence,

under the title, "Paul to the Modern Galatians." To this the contributor who was dealt with in it found opportunity to reply in the editorial columns of a different newspaper. Here however he was detected by the "Independent" editor, and good-naturedly given to know that he had not escaped recognition under his editorial anonym ; but no rejoinder was ever made that the contributor himself at least could feel to be at all effective. His own article, which in itself sufficiently indicates the editorial representation provocative of it, is substantially reproduced in the chapter of the present volume entitled, "A Pseud-apostolic Epistle."

The succession of the papers thus contributed to the "Independent" came near being brought abruptly to a close, through the appearance of an editorial note in that journal which used the word "bigoted" in characterization of its contributor, or perhaps of its contributor's views. That word thus applied seemed for a moment to the writer preclusive of further discussion from him in the columns of the newspaper applying it. He, however, in that spirit of obedience to Christ which he had been trying to bring to bear on the subject treated in his articles, wrote, according to the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to the editor ; and an exchange of letters followed, together with some gracious editorial concession in print, which made it appear right to go on with the discussion. The editor had very justly and generously said in his printed note, that the discussion could nowhere else

promise to subserve better his contributor's purpose than as continued in the pages of the "Independent." It was there continued accordingly. The contributor, it may be added, had meantime advised himself by consulting a Pedobaptist friend of his, a gentleman of national reputation, on the point of honor involved. That friend, with great frankness, assured him that in his own opinion the "Independent" editor was quite justified in the severity of the chastisement administered. This of course convinced the sufferer that it was entirely possible for intelligent men other than the "Independent" editor to take a view of the case different from his own; although he did not then feel, nor has he felt since, that the Baptist principle of obedience in all things to Christ would allow *him* openly to apply the word "bigoted" to any Pedobaptist gentleman of his acquaintance; however much as to said gentleman he might, in the secret of his own mind, have been constrained to think the thing implied in that invidious adjective.

There at length came a time when the much-indulged Baptist contributor was told by his Pedobaptist editorial sponsor, that the "Independent" had gone quite to the outermost verge of what was wise in point of proportion, in publishing such articles as his, and the publication of them now would have to cease. Of course there was no just ground of complaint in this; on the contrary, there was only occasion of admiration that the indulgence had been so large in measure and had continued so

long. Even after the notice thus referred to, the offer of an article on "The Baptist Denomination Hygienically Considered" was promptly accepted by the same editor. But after that, articles that were to constitute chapters in the earlier edition of this book had to find their first way to the public eye in other newspapers than the "Independent."

Of the chapters added in the present revised edition, the "Independent," after an interval of years, published several; among them one or two on the famous Bryennios manuscript, entitled "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." An editorial note accompanied, in which the present writer was pleasantly called the "Briareus and Bryennios" of Baptist polemics; but the concession was fairly made to him that his interpretation of the ancient document's allusion to baptism could not be set aside as inadmissible. An alternative interpretation, however, was proposed; and it was largely in the way of showing that this proposed alternative interpretation could not stand, that, later, the present writer published elsewhere a third treatment of the "Teaching." All three papers are reprinted in the following pages.

The "Independent" once paid to the present writer the equivocal compliment of pronouncing him the discoverer (or inventor) and patentee of the argument from "obedience" applied to baptism. If this praise were really deserved, to bestow the praise would perhaps be the most effective available reply to the argument in question. I re-

member saying, years ago, to one of the most accomplished and most persuasive of men, after he had long been urging upon me reasons and grounds for a certain imposing ecclesiastic pretension (in which he himself had no personal interest, except that of a pure and ardent advocate of it), "There is one thing that will always make us Baptists inaccessible to the claim you represent." "What is that?" said he. "Your organization does not obey Christ in the matter of baptism." "But we do; we are all baptized." "Suppose that granted; still, you for instance, you have never yourself obeyed Christ in being baptized." "How is that?" "Why, Jesus says (through the apostle Peter), 'Be baptized,' addressing himself directly to you. You reply, 'I was baptized when an infant.' You did not then obey; you have not obeyed since. You have failed in obedience."

"I never heard it put in that way," the gentleman replied. That was all he said. I have never myself been able to think of anything more, or at least anything better, that he could have said. And perhaps the "Independent" too did the very best that was open to it, in replying to the argument from the principle of obedience, when, with like cogency, in the very article crediting to the present writer the discovery of that argument, it virtually said exactly the same thing: "I never heard it put in that way."

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Let us recall these im-

pressive words of the Master. What above all things we need is an era of simple obedience. In these times of revolt and insurrection against objective authority in the things of the spirit—times in which, as to religion, the social lawlessness of the times of the judges in Israel seems to be revived, and every man does that which is right in his own eyes—what more saving to us all, as individual souls, what more saving to society at large, than the recourse and refuge to be found in the idea, practically realized, of personal obedience on each man's part to Jesus Christ as Master?

It does not much matter at what link in the series of obediences possible we make our beginning. Whatever link we lift, we lift the whole endless chain. The command not yet obeyed, whatever it may be, that is our present blessed opportunity.

W. C. W.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, January, 1897.

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THE BAPTIST PRINCIPLE

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCIPLE DEFINED

THE true organizing principle of Baptist churches may be stated in three words: OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST. An essential part of obedience to Christ consists in persuading to obey him. Christ said (through the Apostle Peter), "Be baptized." This, therefore, is one of his commandments. To "be baptized" is, so far, obedience. But Christ said also, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This is another of his commandments. To "teach" to obey is obedience. Obedience in this full sense—that is, to obey and to teach to obey—is the mission of Baptists.

We insist upon baptism not because it is a rite, but because it is an ordinance. It is not the baptism so much as it is the obedience that concerns us. To have been baptized is, comparatively, nothing; to have obeyed is, comparatively, all. Not to "be baptized," but to obey in being baptized, is what the Baptist principle requires. The

Baptist principle of full obedience to Christ requires this, first, of us ourselves ; and then requires us to require it, secondly, of others. The obligation to obey in being baptized ourselves is imperative, but no less imperative is the obligation to obey in teaching others also to obey in being baptized. The duty of teaching obedience is equal with the duty of obeying—is, indeed, identical with it. Our principle of obedience to Christ makes us, first, Baptists ourselves, and then immediately sets us to making Baptists of others. If we cease to seek proselytes, it is because we, so far, cease to be Baptists. We become Baptists and we become propagandists of Baptist views by one and the same almighty creative act of God. The principle of obedience to Christ makes us, simultaneously and inseparably, both the one and the other.

Baptists, therefore, misunderstand their own position, and suffer their position to be misunderstood by others, when they consider themselves or suffer themselves to be considered merely or mainly the champions of immersion as baptism. Immersion as baptism Baptists unwaveringly believe in ; but immersion as baptism is not the Baptists' reason for existing as a distinct denomination of Christians. It is not for baptism according to a particular definition that they stand, so much as it is for obedience in baptism according to some definition. But it is not for obedience in baptism according to any definition, even according to the true definition, that Baptists stand. What Baptists

stand for is obedience to Christ in everything—in baptism, certainly, but in all other points not less. Their organizing principle is the principle of universal obedience. This principle includes baptism, but it does not exhaust itself in baptism. If, just now, baptism seems to be disproportionately prominent in Baptist inculcation, it is so because of a reason that is destined, as we trust, to be temporary. There is no reason for our being known by the name “Baptists” except that so many Christians still fail of obedience to Christ in baptism. I do not care to say fail of being baptized, or, more exactly, of having been baptized; but fail of obedience in baptism. Our name “Baptists” is a provisional one. We accept it for the time from our brethren. When our brethren accept from us—or, better, from our Lord (both theirs and ours)—the principle of obedience to Christ, they and we together may be contented with the simple common name of “Christians.”

“But how,” it may be asked, “does this Baptist principle of obedience to Christ apply to the Baptist practice of restricted communion? There is no commandment—is there?—of Christ that forbids Baptists to sit down at the Lord’s Supper with Pedobaptists.” Certainly, I answer, there is no such explicit commandment. This is true, on the one hand; but it is equally true, on the other, that there is no commandment that enjoins the intercommunion in question. On both sides alike explicit commandment is wanting. We are left to

infer the will of Christ. To infer the will of Christ, I say ; for we are not left to consult our own will. The principle of obedience forbids that. Now, what is the obviously implied will of Christ ?

“Repent and be baptized,” says Christ. I make no discrimination in authority between what Christ says with his own mouth and what he says by the mouth of an apostle. Every one who “repents”—that is, every one who obeys Christ’s first commandment, in a single word every “convert”—is directed next and in immediate sequel to be “baptized.” Then follow many other commandments, of obligation to be habitually obeyed ; among them—or, rather, besides them—one of a ritual nature, to be often (occasionally, perhaps periodically) but not habitually obeyed. This last commandment, being not moral but ceremonial in its quality, and of occasional rather than of habitual obligation, is, in reason as in fact, placed subsequent to the command, “Repent.” This every one admits. But not less, in fact and in reason, it is also placed subsequent to the command, “Be baptized.” If repenting must precede the Lord’s Supper, being baptized likewise must, as well. The command, “Be baptized,” precedes the command to partake of the Supper as they occur in Scripture, exactly as does the command, “Repent.” So much for the order of Scripture. As for the order of reason, the rite which symbolizes creation, beginning, birth—namely, the rite of baptism—of course precedes the rite which symbolizes suste-

nance, continuance, nurture. Plainly, therefore, the implied will of Christ is, first baptism, afterward the Supper.

Now, to the spirit of obedience, the clearly implied will of Christ is just as binding as his expressed will is. True, there is no distinct commandment, Be baptized before you come to the Supper ; but so there is no distinct commandment, Repent before you come to the Supper. Christ's will, however, is clear as to both points, and no less clear as to the one point than as to the other. The principle of obedience requires us to act accordingly.

But, still further, the principle of obedience requires us to exert our influence to induce others to act accordingly. Now suppose a case. I meet a Christian man who has never obeyed the ordinance, "Be baptized." He may have been sprinkled, he may even have been immersed, in his infancy ; but he has never, in any plain, simple, straightforward sense of the word, obeyed the ordinance, "Be baptized" ; that is to say, being addressed by Christ in the imperative, "Be baptized," he has never once met that imperative with the obedient "I will," but has always replied, "I have been." He has, therefore, never obeyed Christ, in that particular command. I, a Baptist, meet such a man, I say to him, "Come, sit with me at the Lord's Table"—that is, I invite him to do what I believe to be inconsistent with the will of Christ. How does that "teach" him to fulfill Christ's will ? How does that comport with my principle of obedi-

ence? But he says to me, "My conscience is satisfied." I am obliged to reply, "The command is not, 'Satisfy your conscience,' but, 'Be baptized.' I shall not interfere with your satisfying your conscience—indeed, I shall try to enlighten your conscience to satisfy; but meantime surely I cannot invite you to do what I believe to be inconsistent with Christ's will—what I should not be conscience-clear in doing myself."

On the other hand, the same man invites me to sit with him at the Lord's Table. My sitting at the Lord's Table on some suitable occasion is an act of obedience, because I am commanded so to do. My sitting with him, on his invitation, at the Lord's Table is not an act of obedience, because I am not commanded so to do. But if my sitting thus with him should signify approval of his disregard of Christ's will in not having previously obeyed in being baptized, why, I should be guilty of disobedience myself. And if my act did not signify approval of his course, what good result of fellowship or of brotherly love—what good result of any sort—would be gained?

The fact is, that as Baptists could not conscientiously partake themselves of the Supper without previously obeying the command, "Be baptized," so they cannot, expressly or impliedly, countenance the partaking of it by others without the same previous obedience. They cannot invite another to disregard what they believe to be the will of Christ,

any more than they can disregard that will themselves. They cannot accept an invitation to join another in an act which on that other's part involves disregard of Christ's will, any more than they could by word of mouth approve the disregard involved. The act itself would virtually approve the disregard unless accompanied by an explanation and a protest. The protest and explanation, if given, would be drowned and lost in the louder eloquence of the approving act. The only consistent thing for Baptists evidently is to abstain from any implication of themselves in an act which involves disregard of Christ's will. The practice of "restricted communion" is simply such a course of abstinence. "Restricted communion" has in it nothing offensive but the disapproval and protest that it contains. We dare not retract this solemn negative act and signal of fidelity to our Lord and to our brethren. We are sorry to give offense—we like to be liked; but *noblesse oblige*. Relationship to Christ imposes obligations; the principle of obedience to Christ makes us as much afraid to countenance disregard of Christ's will on the part of others as to be guilty ourselves of the disregard. We wish to see our brethren obey Christ precisely as we wish to obey Christ ourselves.

The principle of obedience to Christ is the Baptist principle. That principle is at the bottom both of Baptist baptism and of Baptist restriction of the Lord's Supper to the baptized believer, and of the one as much as of the other.

CHAPTER II

OBEDIENCE AND THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE

OBEDIENCE and the spirit of obedience—I speak in the sphere of relationship to Christ—are sometimes improperly confounded. They are indeed occasionally the same, but not, by any means, always. To keep the two things properly conceived demands from us, therefore, now and then the exercise of a thoughtful discrimination. The d'stinction between them, when a distinction exists, is not seldom of considerable practical importance.

For purposes of useful discrimination, in life as well as in thought, we may properly distinguish two sorts of obedience to Christ. There is, first, the obedience which consists in accepting Christ as Master. This initial and comprehensive act of obedience is what is generally termed conversion. It is the obedience which that saying requires, "Believe on the Lord Jesus"—that is to say, submit to acknowledge that Jesus is your Lord. As respects this inclusive sense of obedience to Christ, the spirit of obedience and obedience itself are manifestly the same. Having the spirit to submit is submitting. Within the scope of this meaning of obedience there are, in fact, no two things to be talked about, either

for discrimination or for identification ; there is but the one thing, indifferently named now obedience and now spirit of obedience. Here, then, no danger exists of injurious mistake in confounding things that differ ; for there are no differing things to confound.

But there is a second sense of the expression, Obedience to Christ. In this second sense obedience consists in actually doing particular things, outward or inward, that Christ has commanded. Christ's commandments, however, never are outward merely : they are sometimes inward merely. But if they are outward in part, they are always, at the same time, in part inward.

Two cases, therefore, arise. One case is that of commands that are wholly inward in their nature ; the other is that of commands that are partly inward and partly outward. These two cases admit of being clearly distinguished. In the case of commands wholly inward, obedience and the spirit of obedience are identical. Take, for instance, the command, "Rejoice." Here, evidently, having the joyful spirit is precisely the thing commanded. To rejoice and to have the spirit of rejoicing are one and the same thing. A second time, accordingly, we find obedience and the spirit of obedience to be mutually convertible terms. In the case, however, of particular commands that are partly inward and partly outward, we are compelled to establish a distinction. Here two quite separable elements enter into the command, and two severally corres-

ponding elements, also quite separable in thought, enter into the obedience. There is a spirit of the command—that is one element; and there is a letter of the command—that is another element. So there is too a spirit of obedience—that is one element; and there is the actual obeying—that is another element. For full obedience these two elements of course must co-exist. If I have only the spirit to obey, I meet only the spirit of the command. It is needful, besides, to actually obey, in order to discharge a complete obedience. Take an illustration.

Christ says, through an apostle, “Confess your faults one to another.” In these words a specific outward act is commanded, involving implicitly a specific inward spirit. Two elements enter into the command, and two elements must enter into the obedience. I have committed, let us say, a fault against a brother. I conceive and cherish the spirit of obedience as to the commanded act of confession. Now, if this obedient spirit in me is genuine and complete, I have already satisfied the spirit of the command before I actually confess; but have I obeyed the command? No, for the command is outward as well as inward; and I must comply outwardly as well as inwardly in order to perfect obedience. Not till I actually confess shall I have obeyed. Obeying must be added to the spirit of obeying to make up obedience.

Does it follow, then, that in such a case I may perhaps have the spirit of obedience—the undoubt-

edly genuine spirit of obedience—and, after all, not actually obey ? Under some circumstances I answer yes. An impossibility may have intervened. The brother transgressed against is inaccessible to me for some reason—perhaps through death. The spirit of the command is now all that obliges me ; and my obligation is fulfilled if I exercise the spirit of obedience. If I am physically unable to obey literally, I am free from moral blame for not literally obeying. I do not now disobey, though I fail to obey. But that is not because I exercise the spirit of obedience, and the spirit of obedience is the same as actual obedience, or as good ; it is rather because actual obedience is not required of me. Under such circumstances I am not addressed in the outward part of the command. The letter of the command does not speak to me. I am free from disobedience to the letter, not because I have obeyed in the spirit, but because in the letter I was not commanded. Self-evidently, the spirit of obedience does not become obedience by virtue of the fact that obedience is impossible. In short, where a particular act is commanded, the spirit of obedience is *never* commensurate and identical with obedience. In such a case obedience must always be completed by obeying. If obedience is physically impossible obedience is not morally required. What is then required is (perhaps) repentance for not having obeyed while obedience was still possible ; but of course I cannot claim that I do render obedience in the mere fact of my repenting that I have not obeyed.

Suppose again. I have misunderstood, we will say, or I have entirely overlooked, the command in question. In this new case I do not obey, and, what is more, I cannot even say that I have cherished the spirit of obedience as regards that particular command. I have neither obeyed nor had the purpose to obey. Where, now, is my obedience? Evidently, it must be looked for, if anywhere, in my first general act of submitting to Christ as Master. Will this suffice? Will obedience in the gross dispense me from the obligation to obedience in detail? If so, why should Christ ever have issued any specific precepts? The principle that the spirit of obedience in general is sufficient to answer in place of obedience to particular precepts would be antinomianism pure and simple. No; obedience to a specific injunction cannot be rendered without actually obeying that specific injunction. And if any specific injunction has been either misunderstood or altogether overlooked, then it cannot be claimed that, with reference to that specific injunction, as intended by its author, even the spirit of obedience has been exercised. As before, in the instance of its having become impossible to obey, so now, in the instance of a command being overlooked or misunderstood, I may be forgiven for non-obedience. But, mark, non-obedience is not converted into obedience by the presence of any such mistake, however excusable. Nothing but obeying completes obedience here. And nothing but the spirit that meets a command

with a frank and conscious "I will" is even the spirit of obedience with respect to that particular commandment.

Now for an important application. Christ says, "Be baptized." Here a particular act is enjoined, whether he meant sprinkling or pouring or dipping. Let us suppose it uncertain, but it is some act. Now with reference to this commandment—no matter, for the moment, whether of dipping or pouring or sprinkling—full obedience is not conceivable except as rendered in an act performed by the person addressed. The person to be baptized is spoken to (no one else) and commanded to perform an act. The act is, being baptized. This act, therefore, must be performed by him, or no obedience is rendered.

But further. Not only has the person commanded not obeyed unless he has performed the commanded act, but he has not even exercised the spirit of obedience as respects this particular commandment—whether of sprinkling or pouring or dipping—unless he has some time, at least, in his life, met the ordinance, "Be baptized," with the conscious answer, "I will."

Now let the great mass of my Pedobaptist brethren consider candidly for one moment with themselves what position they occupy to-day with respect to the commandment, "Be baptized." Whether the commandment means "be sprinkled," or whatever it means, they not only have not obeyed it, but they have never exercised toward it

even the spirit of obedience. They were baptized (let us suffer the word) when they were infants. Grant it. But certainly they themselves fulfilled no obedience. Nay, they themselves performed no act commanded. The act commanded, on their part, was to submit themselves to baptism; but they did not submit themselves to baptism, much less did they exercise the proper accompanying spirit of obedience. Both the act expressly commanded and the accompanying spirit, commanded by implication, are wanting to their discharge of obedience to the commandment. The commandment, always obligatory until obeyed, confronts them in the New Testament, "Be baptized." Obedience is not impossible to them. The commandment is not overlooked by them. It is not, as we at present will suppose, misunderstood. But it is not obeyed. It is not even met with the spirit of obedience. It never has been. Our Pedobaptist brethren will not claim that they ever once met Christ's words, "Be baptized," with the inward answer, "I will." They have always said, "I have been"; as if what Christ wanted of them was the state, on their part, of having been baptized, instead of the very thing commanded, namely, the act—performed by them in conscious obedience—of being baptized, or, in still other words, the act of intelligently and obediently submitting themselves to baptism! A ceremony never commanded by Christ is allowed, with them, to supplant an ordinance expressly established by Christ. If infant baptism

were only a ceremony added and superfluous ! but it is made a substitute for a rite ordained by Christ.

I would earnestly ask my Pedobaptist brethren to ponder with themselves what that meaneth : “ Thus have ye made the COMMANDMENT OF GOD of none effect by YOUR TRADITION.”

And, since some inevitable not happy effect of the importunate author's personality may have entered at points to hinder the success of his argument with the reader, may he not invite the reader to consider what has been said as if no person had said it, but as if only the reason and nature of things had been pleading for the first rights of Jesus as Lord.

CHAPTER III

WHICH ? THE FACT OR THE ACT ?—THAT IS,
RITUALISM OR OBEDIENCE ?

IT is no doubt often matter of perfectly sincere—
and, it must be owned, not unnatural—sur-
prise to Pedobaptists that their Baptist brethren
should insist as strongly as they do upon their own
distinctive view of the true relation between bap-
tism and repentance. “You Baptists”—this, prob-
ably, would reflect the general Pedobaptist state
of mind upon the point—“you Baptists say obedi-
ence is the great thing. We heartily agree with
you. Obedience to Christ you claim to be the
Baptist principle. We claim obedience to Christ
for our own principle, at the same time that we do
not deny it to be yours. We desire, we Pedobap-
tists, to obey Christ as much as do you. Christ
says, ‘Be baptized’; and we are baptized. Christ
says, ‘Repent’; and we have repented. Do we
not meet Christ’s will ? Are we not obedient ?”

But I need not have constructed a conjectural
statement. A Pedobaptist writer of no mean in-
fluence, undertaking to speak on behalf of his Pedo-
baptist brethren, expressed himself publicly, not
long since, upon this very point, in the following
words :

“Those baptized in infancy suppose they have obeyed the command to ‘be baptized.’ They know they have exercised the spirit of obedience to it. When the command says, ‘Do,’ they reply, in filial obedience, ‘I do.’ When the command says, ‘Be,’ they reply, in an equally obedient spirit, ‘Yea, Lord, I am.’”

This brings the issue between Baptists and Pedobaptists to a point.

Two important mistakes are, as I think, involved in the sentences quoted—one, a mistake respecting the true nature of obedience in general; the other, a mistake respecting the true nature of a certain particular command to be obeyed. Let us consider these mistakes in order.

First, then, I venture to maintain that in the foregoing quotation the spirit of obedience is not truly interpreted. The spirit of obedience does not reply, “I do,” or, “I am.” It replies, “I will.” “I will” is the invariable reply of the spirit of obedience. The spirit of obedience does not know how to reply to a command in any other tense than the future. When the command comes with the word “Be,” the full reply of the spirit of obedience is, “I will be.” When the command comes with the word “Do,” the full reply of the spirit of obedience is, “I will do.”

To reply to the command “Be,” “I am,” or to the command “Do,” “I do,” is to affirm one or the other of the two following things, neither of which belongs to the language of the spirit of obedience

—namely, either “This command was not necessary, for I had anticipated it,” or else “This command is not obligatory, for I have obeyed it.” But, as already said, neither the one nor the other of these two affirmations is the language of the spirit of obedience. To say, “This command was not necessary, for I had anticipated it,” is, in case the command is addressed to you, irreverent. It is the language of pride, of self-righteousness. To say, “This command is not obligatory, for I have obeyed it,” is right or it is wrong according as to say so is true or is false—according, observe, as to say so is true or false, but by no means, necessarily, according as you think it to be true or false. If to say so is false, it is wrong, whether you think it true or not; though of course, less wrong if you think it true. On the other hand, if it is true that you have indeed once obeyed—once, and for all, the command being of a nature to require but a single obedience—why, then your language is simply the language of sane recollection and of proper self-justification. But, though entirely right language for the case supposed, it yet is not at all the language of the spirit of obedience. The spirit of obedience, I repeat, has but one language. That language can be nothing different; it is forever, “I WILL.” And unless this language—the consenting “I will”—has at some moment been spoken in response to the command, whether to “Be” or to “Do,” the command has not yet been obeyed.

It is not arrogance for me, a Baptist, to say this.

It is certainly far from "contempt." Contempt does not seek to convince : contempt is content with its sneer. And to say this is no claim for myself of omniscience. It is simply a denial to some of my Christian brethren of the attribute of omniscience, even with reference to themselves—denial implied in a loyal and respectful endeavor on my part to show them that what they have, undoubtedly in good faith, thought to be obedience is not obedience ; that what they have honestly believed to be, with themselves, the true spirit of obedience is, in reality, not the spirit of obedience, but something else. I speak to the spirit of obedience in general, assumed to be in the heart of my brethren. I seek to convince that brotherly, that willing, that intelligent spirit, that in one certain particular it has failed to exercise itself. My very attempt implies respect and affection. I should have nothing to say on the point on which I am saying so much if I did not believe that at heart my brethren desired to obey. Let us have the mind of Christ, whatever it is. But we need the mind of Christ to find the mind of Christ. How helpless we are ! But how rich in available help !

In the second place, as to the true nature of the particular command. Does the command, "Be baptized," require something done, merely—an *opus operatum*—or, rather, the doing of something ? Which is it, the fact or the act ? Does the command mean, "Make sure that you be in the condition of one who at some time in the past was

baptized," "Secure the fact of having been baptized"; or does it mean, "Become baptized," "Have yourself baptized," "Submit yourself to baptism," "Perform the act of being baptized"? This is the alternative. According as we choose here, we decide absolutely whether persons baptized in their infancy may be said thus to have met the will of Christ. If Christ's will is simply that the state of having once been baptized shall be enjoyed by every Christian somehow, but not necessarily through the voluntary procurement of the subject, why, then the person baptized unawares in his infancy may be said to meet Christ's will. If, however, Christ's will be that every Christian shall consciously and purposely perform an act in his own baptism, why, evidently the person baptized in helpless infancy has not therein met Christ's will; and he does not meet it until he deliberately has himself baptized. The question admits of no other alternative. Let us see. (It is constantly to be borne in mind that there is no point raised here as to what true baptism is, whether immersion or sprinkling. The present argument would stand just the same if the command read "Be sprinkled," instead of "Be baptized.")

Happily, the Greek language is less liable than is our own to any ambiguity here. Our expression "Be baptized," (or "sprinkled") of course most naturally means "Have yourself baptized" (or "sprinkled"). But then, it conceivably might mean, "Be, or remain, in a condition of having been

baptized." This sense, no doubt, is somewhat violent. But it is not absolutely excluded. If a command were issued in English in the terms "Be baptized," there would, let us acknowledge, be just a possible chance for the doubt whether one who had at some time involuntarily been baptized might not fulfill the command by simply remaining of consent (as he, however, could indeed not help remaining), in that sense, a baptized person. But the Greek imperative employed for the command "Be baptized" does not allow an alternative. It means one thing—one thing only—and can mean nothing else. The question now is, What is that thing?

To express the very unlikely, the well-nigh solecistic idea, "Be a baptized person," the Greek would appropriate a peculiar form of the verb. It would use an imperative of the perfect tense, either in its simple form, or perhaps more naturally, in a compound form of it, made up of two parts, one part a perfect passive participle meaning "having been baptized," and the other part the simple imperative of the verb "be." The expression, in whichever form, would therefore exactly say, "Be having been baptized," "Have been baptized," or "Be a baptized person." Is it probable that such a command as this ever proceeded from God? Still, to this command, supposed real, a person who had been baptized in infancy might claim that he is obedient in virtue of agreeing now, in his will, to what happened once without his will. If there

were any such divine command as the one supposed, I grant that to such a command the spirit of obedience might almost, by exception, adopt a foreign, a non-vernacular language, and return for answer, "I am," instead of her vernacular "I will."

But for the easier and more probable meaning, "Be baptized"—that is, "Become baptized," "Procure yourself to be baptized," "Have yourself baptized,"—the Greek has a different form of expression. For this meaning it uses the simple aorist imperative. This imperative commands an act—an act conceived as occurring at a point of time, and at that point completed and done with. Consequences may follow, a condition resulting from the act may be inevitable; such condition, however, such consequences, the imperative does not contemplate or imply. The bare act, that alone, separate from every state, concomitant or resultant, is all that the form of the verb itself contains or implies. There is accordingly no room for doubt, since all ambiguity is excluded.

Now, it is this particular form of the verb, the simple aorist imperative, that is used for the command, "Be baptized." An act, therefore, is commanded. The circumstance that the command is in the passive voice is of course entirely irrelevant. A command not requiring an act of obedience is unthinkable, this equally whether the command be grammatically active or passive. "Be baptized," as a command at least means "Submit to be baptized." This submitting is an act, and that act is obedience.

Without the willing performance of an act on the part of the person addressed in the command, the command is not obeyed. The sincere and earnest Pedobaptist has but to ask himself the question, "Have I ever performed the act commanded?"—remembering, at the same time, conscientiously, that the act commanded is the act of being or becoming baptized, not the act, if that were possible, of having been baptized—in order to determine with himself whether he has ever obeyed the command. The act required is that of submitting yourself to baptism. Did you ever submit yourself to baptism? The command being, "Submit yourself to baptism," you cannot reply, "I am." The reply does not fit the command. The only obedient reply possible is "I will." Have you at any time returned this reply?

You may rejoin—as of course, unless you are an exceptional Pedobaptist (that is, unless you were sprinkled on conversion), I cannot conceive but in honesty you must—"No, I never did, acting of my own accord, submit myself to baptism. I never consciously took the posture of purposed actual obedience to the command. This, indeed, is the truth, and I frankly confess it." You go further, and say: "But I do not acknowledge that I am therefore disobedient. The truth of the matter is, I do not consider myself addressed in the command, 'Be baptized.' If I considered myself addressed in the command, I should certainly perform the act commanded, and so render my obedience. As it is,

I do not obey because I do not feel commanded. It is no disobedience not to obey if one is not commanded."

This reply to the argument of the present chapter is entirely intelligible. But the reply, let it be closely observed, admits that the command, "Be baptized," is not obeyed any longer by Pedobaptists in general—being not obeyed because not obligatory ; being not obligatory because not intended for persons baptized in their infancy. But that it is not intended for such persons is pure and absolute assumption, and assumption not only without scriptural reason in its favor, but without rational plausibility. If there had been a clause of exception, express or implied, inserted in the command—if the command had read, for instance, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, unless you shall have been previously baptized in your infancy, in which case you must still repent, indeed, but you need not be baptized"—then the Pedobaptist practice would require only one thing further, a somewhat serious thing, to be sure—namely, to show that sprinkling is baptism—in order to complete its own justification. But no such clause of exception occurs in the text itself of the command, nor is it contained in any form elsewhere in Scripture whence it might be transferred and attached.

"Yes, but," it is objected, "your implied demand that there should be an explicit clause of exception in favor of persons baptized in their infancy is unreasonable. There was introduced no clause

of exception like what you construct, for the sufficient reason that there were then no persons that had been baptized in their infancy to whom it could apply."

Of course, I admit this statement of fact. I go beyond merely admitting it—I insist upon it; and I point out, further, a noteworthy additional fact. It is this: At the very moment, of all moments in early church history, when infant baptism, as an ordinance of Christ, should seem likely to have appeared, if ever it was to appear at all, there is observable a pregnant silence on the subject in the Scripture narrative. Not quite absolute silence, either, if strong adverse implication may be deemed to break absolute silence. For these cautionary words occur, reporting the sequel of results that attended Peter's pentecostal exhortation: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." Since, however, there was confessedly, on this occasion, no class of persons baptized in infancy to whom an exceptive clause based on that infant baptism could apply, it ought, at the very least, if Pedobaptist usage is to find valid support, to be shown from Scripture that such a class of persons was divinely desired and intended to arise. (Else the absence of the exceptive clause may best be accounted for by the divinely desired and intended non-existence of any class supposed to be excepted.) And how, I ask, can the existence of a Divine desire and intention of this kind—namely, that there should arise a class of persons baptized in their in-

fancy—be shown? In no way whatsoever, I am confident.

But, in default of indication to that effect, supposing still that a class of persons to whom exception, on such a basis, was desired and intended by God to arise, how then, I ask, should not the forecast of the Holy Spirit have provided for their future case by implying somewhere, somehow, in Scripture, an exemption in their favor from the obligation of the command, if it is indeed true that these persons, or any persons, were meant to be exempted?

I have two serious questions to propose:

First, May not a human will fail of the spirit of obedience sometimes in not feeling itself obliged, as much as in not obeying when the obligation is recognized and confessed?

Second, Wherein does a system which scrupulously performs a rite without therein obeying any assignable Divine command or therein following any recognizable scriptural precedent; which submits an unconscious subject to a ritual observance, as if that ritual observance were the necessary condition of supernatural grace to that subject; which ritually manipulates a subject without requiring, or even permitting, that subject so much as to say, "I agree to this ritual"; which, in short, as to one particular thing, and that thing the half of all Christ's positive law, makes everything of ritual, and nothing of obedience—wherein, I ask, does such a system differ essentially from ritualism?

CHAPTER IV

THE TWO ORDINANCES APPOINTING BAPTISM

THE ORDINANCE "BAPTIZE"

AN ordinance is properly something ordained—that is, commanded. In saying “properly” here, I mean originally, etymologically. An ordinance is, therefore, in its strict first sense a commandment—only that and all that, nothing more and nothing less and nothing else. Let us try changing, accordingly, for a moment, our customary expression, “ordinance of baptism,” into the expression used in entitling this chapter; let us say, the ordinances (commandments) appointing baptism. It may yield us some valuable results. When we say, “the ordinance of baptism,” we mean the ordinance which consists in baptism. There is in Scripture one ordinance (rite) of baptism, and but one. There are in Scripture two ordinances (commandments), and but two, respecting baptism. The two ordinances respecting baptism fix the one ordinance of baptism.

The two scriptural ordinances respecting baptism exist in various forms of statement; but, whatever various forms of statement exist, they contain all of them the same substance. One of the two ordinances directs to “baptize”; the other directs to

“be baptized.” The ordinance of baptism is constituted by these two ordinances respecting baptism. Besides these two ordinances respecting baptism, there are in Scripture absolutely no other. Now, in order to determine what is the true ordinance of baptism, evidently our just course is to study what are the real scriptural ordinances *respecting* baptism. Let us, then, proceed to examine these. They exist in three—perhaps four—distinguishable kinds of statement.

First, and most direct, there are the imperative sentences respecting baptism uttered by Christ and his apostles. For example: “Teach all nations, baptizing them” (Matt. 28 : 19); “Repent and be baptized, every one of you” (Acts 2 : 38). Second, and scarcely less direct, there are the instructions of Christ and his apostles delivered in the didactic indicative mode. I discriminate this kind of statement to introduce what is perhaps the sole instance of it—namely, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16 : 16). I refrain from insisting on this text, for the reason that some—perhaps quite needlessly—doubt its genuineness. Third, there are the authoritative examples of Christ and his inspired disciples, contained in the inspired narratives of the New Testament. For example: “Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John” (John 4 : 1); “And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him” (Acts 8 : 38). Fourth, there are the allusions and interpretations and applications—of

value in proportion to the remote and incidental nature of their bearing—found in the inspired New Testament Epistles. For example: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4 : 5); "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6 : 3.) For the purposes of this chapter we may confine ourselves to the first of these four kinds of statement, comprising those direct imperative sentences of Christ and Christ's apostles, in which Christ's will concerning baptism is recorded.

Here, in the first place, are clearly distinguishable two mutually related—in fact, reciprocally complementary—classes of commandment. On the one hand, there is a commandment addressed to a certain order of persons, directing them, on their part, to administer baptism; or, more simply, to baptize. On the other hand, there is a commandment addressed to a certain different order of persons, directing them, on their part, to receive the baptism administered; or, more simply, to be baptized. These two mutually complementary classes of commandment, as I have said, exist in various forms of statement in Scripture; but, essentially, all forms of statement require the same things—namely, on the one side, the act of baptizing; on the other, the act of being baptized.

There might have been other ordinances in Scripture respecting baptism—that is, other ordinances are conceivable—but, in point of fact, no others occur. Hence, "Baptize" and "Be baptized"—

or, in other words, "Perform the act of baptizing" and "Perform the act of being baptized"—may truthfully be styled the two scriptural ordinances respecting baptism. There might have been an ordinance, "Have certain persons baptized," but no such ordinance as this exists. There might have been an ordinance, "Be in the state of having been baptized," but no such ordinance as that exists. The two ordinances, "Perform the act of baptism" and "Perform the act of being baptized," are the only ordinances to be found in any form in Scripture respecting baptism.

We are ready now to look at those two chief places in Scripture where these two sole ordinances respecting baptism occur in their most direct and imperative form. Our object shall be to ascertain the true limits, as to persons and as to perpetuity of the obligation created, of the command or ordinance, "Be baptized."

I divide the question, and confine myself to that branch of it which inquires, "What persons are properly addressed in the commandment, however expressed, 'Be baptized'?" for the reason that this is the really living and important issue involved. The point, "What persons are properly addressed in the commandment, however expressed, 'Baptize'?" excites, and deserves to excite, no special interest. Scripture seems to treat this as a point of little moment. Thus it is incidentally said, in parenthesis, "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but

his disciples).” Again, Paul thanks God that he himself baptized none, or almost none, of the church at Corinth, to which he was writing. It is worth noting, however, and it pertains to our purpose, that, while a slight is thus put upon the matter of who baptized, there is, at the same time, in both cases, in the very fact that baptizing is mentioned at all, a striking implication of great importance attached, in the mind of the Spirit, to the matter of the baptizing itself. Why was not the statement that Jesus “made disciples” allowed by the evangelist to stand alone as sufficient for the substance of the history? Evidently because baptizing was an inseparable incident of making disciples. Baptizing was important enough to be invariably done, under our Lord’s personal ministry, as fast—and of course only so fast—as disciples were made, and then important enough besides to be distinctly, and it might almost seem superfluously, mentioned by the inspired narrator as having been done. Paul’s allusion is equally unmistakable proof that baptism, in New Testament times, clung to discipleship like shadow to its substance. Nothing can betray more clearly failure to appreciate the proportion and perspective in which baptism appears in Scripture than the disposition sometimes manifested to make baptism seem of trivial consequence. The very passages perverted to favor this notion demonstrate the contrary with inexpugnable implication.

The authoritative expression for that ordinance respecting baptism which directs to administer it, is

found in the concluding verses of the last chapter of Matthew. Our concern with it here is simply to state clearly the implication it contains as to the persons to whom baptism may properly be administered. A separate consideration will be given in succeeding chapters to the course of exegesis by which the implication now merely stated is unassailably established. The risen Lord, now about to ascend into heaven, says to his disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The word "teach," occurring here twice, represents two different and discriminated words in the original Greek. "Teach all nations" means, to use a convenient coinage, "Disciple all nations." The first part, therefore, of the compound commandment is, "Go and convert all men, of whatever nation, into disciples to me." The second part is, "Baptize those thus converted." The third part is, "Teach comprehensive and exact obedience of my commandments to those thus first converted and then baptized." It is a remarkable thing, not to be left out of present regard, that a positive external ceremonial enactment or ordinance should be inserted here in so brief a summary, delivered under circumstances so august and imposing, of apostolic and evangelistic duty. That it is thus inserted is significant of an importance given it in the design

of the Lord that, with the lax instinct and habit, not to say self-sufficient conceit, prevalent in our day, of disparaging outward observances in religion as barren and indifferent, we should perhaps hardly have anticipated. The church of Christ, one would unhesitatingly predict, will never neglect baptism. And, true enough, the church never has neglected it. That is to say, the church, in all its branches—with the exception, sole, so far as I know, of the Friends—has uniformly observed a rite that went by the title of "baptism." The name, at least, has never wanted its honor, if the thing originally meant by the name has sometimes failed to receive its due of attention.

Christ's disciples, then, were commanded by him, on this farewell occasion, to "disciple" and baptize. We need not here go into the subtleties and refinements of interpretation with which the true sense of the Great Commission, so called, has been perplexed and confused. It is sufficient for the moment to say that the persons put by it under obligation to be baptized were, first, disciples; second, disciples of all nations; third, disciples of every age of the world to the end of time. The duty created of being baptized—that is, of submitting to baptism (not of being in a baptized condition, or, rather, in the condition of having once been baptized) devolved on persons who had first been made disciples; it extended to persons of all nations answering to this description; and it was to remain binding to the end of the age. In short,

baptism for disciples and for no others—for disciples universally, and for disciples perpetually—was commanded in these solemn farewell words of Christ.

We have thus sought to make clear the unquestionable implication contained in the great ordinance of Christ which commands to baptize—the implication contained in it, I mean, respecting the persons upon whom the command was to be obeyed. It was upon persons who had previously been made disciples. Only such, but all such. No question is now raised as to what is the act of being baptized. That doubt may here sleep. The act, whatever it is, of being baptized is incumbent upon disciples. Disciples can be no other than persons capable of discipleship—that is, persons capable of being taught. Make disciples of, baptize, teach—that is Christ's order ; and Christ's order is as binding as the different things are, one by one, which he has set in that order.

But there is a still plainer instruction for us—if instruction can be plainer—in that commandment, complementary to the one thus far chiefly considered, which directly addresses the persons themselves to be baptized. That commandment I reserve for consideration in its due season. It constitutes the second and more important of the two scriptural ordinances respecting baptism. It is the ordinance, "Be baptized."

CHAPTER V

THE TWO ORDINANCES APPOINTING BAPTISM

(CONTINUED)

THE ORDINANCE "BE BAPTIZED"

AS already remarked, there are two ordinances, and but two, in Scripture appointing baptism. The first is, "Baptize"; the second is, "Be baptized." The first of these two ordinances I have already examined. I purpose now examining the second.

My object in this new examination will be the same as it was in that previously accomplished, namely, to ascertain from Scripture on what persons the ordinance "Be baptized" imposes obligation.

Let us go at once to the ordaining words. These we find in the sequel to Peter's pentecostal discourse. Here they are: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." This is sufficiently explicit. No Christian doubts that here was created an obligation imperative upon every person addressed by Peter. As to what persons beyond these are bound by the obligation, Baptists and Pedobaptists differ. Baptists say, "All persons capable of understanding them, to whom the words come"; Pedobaptists say, "All such persons, excepting those who may have

been baptized in their infancy." The chief dividing question between Baptists and Pedobaptists is, "Is this exception scriptural?"

This, observe, is not the same as asking, "Is infant baptism scriptural?" That question we will not now disturb; let it rest. We need ask only, "Is there a class of persons bound by the first part of the twofold command, 'Repent and be baptized,' but not bound by the second?"

This is an entirely fair way of stating the question. For the controverted point, as here conceived, is not, "In what way may the obligation, admitted to be binding, be discharged?" but, "Upon what persons is it binding?" I repeat it, therefore, the living issue in this matter is, "Is there a class of persons bound by one-half of the command, 'Repent and be baptized,' and not bound by the other half?" That is the true point to be decided.

You, let us suppose, are met by the requirement, "Repent and be baptized." You answer, "As to being baptized, that part is for me already happily accomplished. I was baptized while still an infant. The repenting, however, I have yet to do." This, in effect, is the unconscious language of every destined and hereditary Pedobaptist up to the time of his conversion. At the time of his conversion—that is, be it borne in mind, at the moment when he exercises his very first impulse of obedience toward God—he, instead of obeying a certain perfectly plain command, contents himself with saying, "That command is not binding upon me."

But why, let me ask, not binding? Not, certainly, because you have ever obeyed it. For you had never obeyed any command of God until you repented; and as soon as you repented you said, "The command, 'Be baptized,' is not binding upon me." Not, therefore, because you have ever obeyed it, but because, before you performed, or could perform, any act whatever of obedience, an incident occurred at which you were indeed personally present, but in which you yourself bore no part, except a perfectly passive and unconscious part, and which, of course, now you cannot even remember.

Perhaps, however, you will be disposed to put your answer in another form. You will say: "It is not by the bare fact of my having involuntarily been baptized in infancy that I hold myself discharged from obligation. No; I add now a voluntary element of my own. I intelligently accept that former act of another as my present personal act. This subsequent ratification on my part is my obedience."

But consider: That former act of another which you thus accept was not "being baptized." It was not, therefore—it could not be—obedience on that other's part to the command, "Be baptized." It was with him, if obedience at all, obedience to some command—for instance, "Have this child baptized." For what that other person did was simply having you baptized. The minister, we will say, obeyed the ordinance, "Baptize." Your parents

obeyed, suppose, an ordinance, "Have children baptized." The ordinance, "Be baptized," did not on occasion of your infant baptism—and, from the nature of the case, in that transaction it could not—get obeyed at all. You, accordingly, are placed in this remarkable position: You accept for your obedience to the command, "Be baptized," an act of another, which, if obedience at all on any one's part, must have been obedience to a command substantially in these terms: "Have this child baptized." God, that is, says to you, "Be baptized"; and you say to God, "I accept for my obedience to this command my parents' act in having once had me baptized." What sort of obedience is this? You accept an act which another performs, but which the words in question, at least, do not command, either to that other or to yourself, or, in fact, to anybody—you accept this different act, performed by some one else, as your own performance of the particular inconvertible act explicitly commanded you. God says, "Do a specific thing"; and you reply, "Another person has done something else, and I accept that as my obedience."

Or perhaps you will give your reply a still different form. You will say, not, "I accept another's act as my own act"; but, "I retrospectively accept my own former irresponsible act in being baptized, while an infant, as my present responsible act; and that is my obedience." But the difficulty here is that, in being baptized when an infant, you did not yourself act at all. You were simply acted upon.

There is no former act, therefore, of your own that you can now adopt. In this state of the facts, what becomes of your obedience? It must be wholly inward and spiritual, and not physical and outward in any part. For there is no outward element, past or present, to which it can attach itself to find completeness.

Your obedience, therefore, if you have indeed rendered obedience to the command, "Be baptized," bears no relation whatever to your infant baptism. That transaction has nothing to do with your obedience. Your infant baptism may or may not have been right and scriptural. But whether right and scriptural or not, it is, at any rate, in no conceivable way related, as obedience, to the command addressing you, and you alone, in the second person, "Be baptized." Your sole obedience, if you may be considered somehow to have obeyed, lies in a certain posture of your mind and will. It consists in saying within yourself, acquiescently and dutifully, "I have been baptized." No bodily act of yours, present or preceding, enters into it. It is all mental and subjective. You obey by inwardly considering that you have obeyed.

Reflect now a moment on the necessary implications of what you have thus far claimed for yourself. You began by denying that the command, "Be baptized," was obligatory upon you. In the course of giving your reasons for its not being obligatory, you unawares confessed that it was obligatory, and claimed, besides, that you had in

one or the other of two ways met its obligation—that is, either you have by a subsequent act of pure mental adoption substituted for your own obedience to one command, “Be baptized,” what somebody else once did in supposed obedience to a quite other command, “Have infants baptized”; or, if not this, then by an equally pure mental exercise, you have inwardly put a strictly imaginary former act of your own—imaginary, for in reality you performed no act—in place of a present act commanded, and in virtue of your very course of reply acknowledged by you to be of binding obligation upon you.

Is it likely that our Lord intended a positive external ordinance of his to be thus fulfilled? Does he desire a constructive obedience? By single and solitary exception does he desire this particularly in the matter of the commandment, “Be baptized”? And if he does, by what information of Scripture has he made his desire known?

Bringing thus together the two sole scriptural ordinances respecting baptism, namely, “Baptize” and “Be baptized,” and examining them in comparison, we perceive that they have reference to the same class of persons, that they are correlative and complementary, the one answering exactly to the other. Whom Christ bids, on the one hand, “Be baptized,” with reference to these it is that, on the other, Christ bids “Baptize.” These, and besides these none. But with reference to these he does not bid “Baptize” until, with reference to the

same, he has first bidden "Make them disciples"; as likewise these he does not bid "Be baptized" until he has first bidden the same persons "Repent." If we baptize other persons than these, or if other persons than these are baptized, in either case no obedience is rendered; for in neither case does any command exist to be obeyed. Such baptizing we may indeed call the "ordinance of baptism"; but we then use the word "ordinance" in the secondary, derivative sense of "rite" simply. We quite deceive ourselves if we imagine that our rite comes under any scriptural ordinance that exists respecting baptism. We fulfill a form, but we do not obey an ordinance.

What is ritualism? Is it essentially anything else than practising rites without therein obeying divine ordinances?

CHAPTER VI

THE CONTEXT AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT

I MEAN the context of the precept, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you"—so much of the context, that is to say, as embraces the promise annexed. That portion of the context is this: "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." My object in the present chapter is to set forth a certain interpretation of the foregoing words adopted by many Pedobaptists, together with some of the reasons which render that interpretation inadmissible.

First, their interpretation. This, if I rightly apprehend it, is as follows: Peter taught his inquiring hearers that they ought to repent, and then to be baptized. He assured them that thereupon the gift of the Holy Ghost would be imparted to them, but not to them alone. Their obedience would be efficacious to procure—potentially, at least—the same blessing also for their children. In consequence of this related obedience of parents and spiritual benefits thence accruing to children, a practical duty devolved upon parents, the duty of having their children baptized.

I have, I confess, experienced some difficulty in stating an explanation which seems to me to err so widely from the truth. If, however, I have failed to state the explanation fairly, it has, at least, been from no conscious wish to put it at any avoidable disadvantage. I proceed to mention a few considerations tending, as I think, to show that this explanation is not worthy of the wide acceptance it has gained.

In the first place, the word "children," as here used by Peter, means "posterity," "descendants," in the large, indefinite, remote sense, and not immediate offspring of a second generation. This is matter of general agreement among authorities (see for example, Robinson's "Lexicon of New Testament Greek"); but it is further clear from the fact that Peter's word "children" is evidently used by him in the same sense with relation to his own audience as was Joel's expression "sons" and "daughters" by Joel with relation to his, in the particular prophecy which Peter is engaged in explaining and applying. But Joel's expression is authoritatively interpreted by Peter to refer to those whom he himself is this moment addressing—that is, to descendants of Joel's contemporaries, removed to a distance in the future from Joel's time of not less than twenty generations. Joel's expression "sons" and "daughters" did indeed include children of the second generation, for it included children of every subsequent generation, beginning from the date of first prophetic fulfill-

ment. It included infant children too, for it included all children ; but it did not include infant children *as* infants, but infant children regarded prospectively, regarded in anticipation—that is, infant children as grown-up children to be ; “ young men ” some of them, “ old men ” some of them, Joel expressly specifies.

In the second place, if the word “ children ” here could be admitted, as it manifestly cannot, to mean offspring of a second generation, brothers and sisters of a single family—though it then might, indeed, mean the grown-up children among these—it still could not mean the infant (non-speaking) children, while infants, additionally ; much less the infant children particularly ; least of all, the infant children exclusively, for the very sufficient reason that the only “ children ” had in view by Peter, and by Joel before Peter, were “ sons ” and “ daughters ” old enough to “ prophesy,” to “ see visions,” and to “ dream dreams.”

In the third place, Peter no more implies that, if his hearers obey, their “ children,” old or young, near or remote, should be thereby entitled to peculiar privileges, than he implies that “ all that are afar off ” should be entitled to peculiar privileges if his hearers obey. It is just as much said, “ The promise is to you and to all that are afar off,” as it is said, “ The promise is to you and to your children.” The connection in thought—the connection of cause and consequence—is the same for one case as it is for the other. Whatever

effect is taught by this passage to be, through parents' obedience, communicated to their "children," that same effect, the passage equally teaches, is, through these parents' obedience, communicated also to all other persons, without respect to mutual relationship of kindred.

"Ah! but you forget," objects some justly watchful Pedobaptist; "there is an important qualification added to the last clause. It is said by Peter, 'All that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*'" Yes, it undoubtedly is. But the limitation thus appended affects equally each one also of the two foregoing clauses. It means, "You, even as many of you as the Lord our God shall call," and, "Your children, even as many of your children as the Lord our God shall call," no less than it means, "All that are afar off, even as many of such as the Lord our God shall call." To suppose that while, on the one hand, with reference to all that are afar off it means those only who shall be called by God, still on the other it means that the promise belongs to you and to your children, irrespective of the divine call, this is clearly inadmissible. No; the call of God is as necessary to one class as it is to either of the others. They all of them need the divine call, and they all need it alike. And when we consider what the divine call spoken of here probably is—that it is "Repent and be baptized"—this consideration alone limits the application of the whole passage, precept and promise together, to such persons

only as are naturally capable of receiving a divine call to repentance and baptism. Infants thus, as infants, are completely excluded—not, thank God ! as I trust, from Christ's grace and the hope of salvation, but from any possible part in the reference of this particular passage. But, supposing this all to be otherwise, and supposing some transcendent relation to be indeed indicated here as existing between parents and their children in the matter of religion, still, how does it follow thence that therefore the children should be baptized?—especially how that infant children, but more especially infant children only, should be baptized? The necessity—nay, even the plausibility—of the sequence here is certainly very obscure.

A fourth consideration weighing against the current Pedobaptist explanation of this important passage is the following: Peter's immediate hearers were Jews and Jewish proselytes. Now, if Peter held out to them, on behalf of their children, some benefit not made common also to those that were "afar off,"—that is, Gentiles,—how is it that we, Gentiles, can any of us claim a share in such peculiar and exclusive benefit? Peter did not, as I believe, put any difference here between Jew and Gentile in favor of the Jew. But if he did, still we, certainly, sinners of the Gentiles, have no profit of the difference. But to talk of such difference is utterly idle. Nay, the apostle instead at a stroke obliterated difference and made all one in Christ. He proclaimed one gospel, the same to all

men, of whatever race, of whatever time. God's call is everywhere and forever to all men individually and independently of one another: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you." Nothing that any one else may have done to me or for me or in my name, nothing that I myself ever did before I repented, has the least effect to make void the perpetual and untransferable obligation that is mine to obey that indivisible twofold call of God bidding me "be baptized" as much as it bids me "repent." There is but one conceivable discharge of the obligation; and that discharge is obedience. But obeyed I have not, obey I cannot, the command, "Be baptized," until I have first repented; for repentance is necessarily the first obedience that apostate man can possibly pay to God.

We resume and conclude, accordingly, as follows:

First, no connection—absolutely none whatsoever—productive of consequences affecting other persons than the persons themselves immediately obliged by the commandment, is hinted at by Peter in this passage as existing between any two classes referred to in it.

Secondly, supposing—however contrary to fact—that some such connection was implied, still there is certainly no such connection implied to exist between, for instance, Peter's immediate hearers and their descendants, that is not also implied to exist between Peter's immediate hearers and all other persons indiscriminately; for the implying words, if there are any, are these: "To you, and to your

children, and to all," in which "to you" is coupled with "to all" as much as it is coupled with "to your children."

But if—as has, however, been shown to be impossible—there were some such peculiar connection implied between Peter's immediate hearers and their descendants, still this would be a connection with which we of our race could have nothing to do, inasmuch as whatever distinction is made between Jews and Jewish proselytes on the one hand, and Gentiles on the other, is with discrimination, if with any discrimination, exclusively in favor of the former class. If it is indicated here that there is a boundary drawn somewhere within which beneficent consequences may descend from ancestors to posterity, then we certainly, as Gentiles ("all that are afar off"), are outside of that boundary; for "to you and to your children" is said by Peter to Jews, as distinguished from Gentiles.

Fourthly, but if, once more, in defiance of all probability—for what is more improbable than that a discrimination in blessing should be instituted to be instantly abolished?—suppose, I say, it were conceded that the peculiar hereditary consequences imagined, whatever they might be, are in the intention of the Spirit transferred without notice from Jew to Gentile, or suddenly and equally without notice, made common to Gentile with Jew, still, the posterity to inherit the consequences would not be immediate children only, brothers and sisters of the next generation, but posterity in the

largest sense. Baptism accordingly would pertain as a right to all descendants of those first hearers of the gospel, irrespective entirely of the immediate parents from whom the descendants might be sprung.

Fifthly, but if, yet again, immediate children only, and not indefinite posterity, were granted to be meant, and to be meant for Gentiles together with Jews, then the inclusion would be of all children, and not of infant children merely; so that, on this hypothesis, similarly, as soon as a father was converted, baptism instantly would become due to all his children, adult equally with infant.

It thus appears that, in order to find infant baptism contained in this place of Scripture, we have to make a number of impossible suppositions, and end besides in finding much more than we sought and much more than it is at all agreeable to any of us to find.

But I have as yet to state a serious additional difficulty to be surmounted. For, however inclusive we make the scope of the passage for the sake of including infants, we are surprised to discover that from even so wide an inclusion infants are shut out at last; for the connection shows that only such children are thought of by Peter as are capable of speaking to "prophesy." It has been as if a fisherman, seeking to make sure of his draught, had stretched his net until the minnows for the sake of which he drew escaped through the meshes.

But, finally, even were infant baptism, against all these impossibilities, to be regarded as established, it would still remain unproved and improbable that infant baptism was designed by Christ to vacate any part of the commandment, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

In contrast with such a difficult, contradictory, self-confuting interpretation of this noble passage of Scripture, stands out in bold and simple clearness and strength the self-evidencing true view, namely, that what Peter said to one he said to all: "Repent and be baptized." This message is for you, every one; for your children, every one; and finally, for those afar off, every one. The same thing, undivided, unchanged, to as many as the Lord our God shall call. The divine call is conveyed in the precept; the precept is, "Repent and be baptized"; the promise appended is, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The word, to be sure, is not, "Without these two things—repentance and baptism, both of them—you shall not receive the Holy Ghost." With repentance only, as we think—even with baptism only, as some think, but not Baptists—many do receive the gift. But the spirit of obedience does not rejoice in enjoying the promise without fully discharging the precept. The spirit of obedience is a generous spirit, and it does not find God's commandments, any of them, grievous. It rejoices in enjoying, but it rejoices even more, if possible, in obeying.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONTEXT AS WE UNDERSTAND IT

A GAIN I mean the context of the precept, "Repent and be baptized." What light does this context throw upon the question of the extent to which the precept preceding is still applicable and obligatory? There is a Baptist and there is a Pedobaptist view of the matter. The Pedobaptist view I sought to present in the chapter preceding. I seek in this chapter to present the Baptist view.

Pedobaptists, in order to justify their present actual practice in the matter of baptism, have three distinct and independent tasks of proof to perform: First, they must prove that sprinkling is baptism; second, they must prove that Christ meant to have infant children baptized; third, when these two things are done, they must proceed still further to prove that Christ meant to exempt persons thus baptized without act of their own, in unconscious infancy, from the duty of fulfilling the precept, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you," by being baptized of their own act on subsequent repentance.

As to the first of these three tasks of proof incumbent on Pedobaptists—that namely which

deals with the question, "What act is commanded in the commandment 'Be baptized'?"—I have nothing here to say. Let it be supposed to be admitted for the moment that sprinkling is baptism. I direct my attention exclusively now to the other two questions—namely, first, "Did Christ mean that parents should have their infant children baptized?" and secondly, "Did Christ mean that persons who had thus been baptized while infants, on motion of their parents, should not afterward on their own motion be baptized in immediate sequel to repentance?"

We are now to seek light on these two questions by examining carefully the appendix to the precept, "Repent and be baptized." It is here proposed, in other words, to consider the precept in the light of the promise appended.

Distinct and independent I call the two questions thus stated; for it by no means follows as a thing of course, infant baptism being supposed clearly made out to be divinely ordained, that therefore infant baptism was divinely intended, in the case of those who have received it, to supersede and displace baptism on repentance. I put the inconsequence thus again, and expressly, for the reason that it seems to me to be a point of some importance, which my Pedobaptist brethren overlook. They content themselves with proving to their own satisfaction that the practice of infant baptism has foundation in Scripture, and they then too easily assume, without even the effort to prove, that such

baptism in infancy was meant by Christ to take the place of baptism after repentance, and even to prevent that. But this, surely, is a large assumption ; and an assumption too, I will venture to say, without much plausibility of any kind in its favor. It is, I admit, supposable that a rite of dedication for infant children might have been appointed by Christ to parents, and appointed too in the form of a baptism. This of course is nowhere in the New Testament said to have happened ; but, had it happened, it is then still further quite equally supposable that this was done by Christ without any design on his part to interfere thereby with the subsequent duty of the unconscious subjects of the rite to obey, like others, in the true sequence of its parts and in its unshorn completeness, the precept, “ Repent and be baptized,” which is apparently by its terms obligatory upon all. Indeed, this latter supposition is antecedently far more probable than is the view generally adopted by Pedobaptists. If circumcision, as Pedobaptists usually maintain, is the analogue and type of infant baptism, then the probability in favor of the alternative supposition here suggested rises almost to the degree of certainty. For those persons, remember, to whom Peter first said, “ Repent and be baptized,” had—most, if not all of them—been circumcised. Those persons, therefore, according to the accepted Pedobaptist hypothesis, represent that class among us who receive baptism in their infancy. But to these circumcised persons, supposed thus to represent

persons baptized in their infancy, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized." Does not Christ by Peter still proclaim to persons who received, suppose, baptism instead of circumcision when they were infants, the same unchanged and uniform summons designed for all, "Repent and be baptized"? If he does not, how is it made plain that he does not?

But, in the way of studying afresh the real scope and intent of Peter's appendix of promise to precept in addressing his pentecostal hearers, let us begin by considering the object with which the promise was appended. Why did Peter promise as well as command? His purpose, manifestly, was two-fold. First, he wished to encourage his inquiring hearers to do what he bade them do—namely, "Repent and be baptized." To compass this aim it was natural to remind them of a blessing conditioned upon obedience. On condition of obedience they too, he said, should receive, as he himself with his fellow-disciples had received, the gift of the Holy Ghost. By way of confirming this assurance, Peter added that the promise in question—that is, the promise of the Holy Ghost's bestowal—was from the first expressly destined and inscribed to them. He went further than this, to be sure, and said something more; but thus much completes that part of what he said which had reference directly and exclusively to his hearers themselves.

It might, however, strengthen their sense of certainty in this matter somewhat—might make them

feel themselves more unquestionably included within the scope of the promise—if they could know that the promise opened wide its beneficent embrace to include not them alone, but with them all generations of their posterity, and even all races of men. Peter accordingly goes on to say that the prophet Joel's promise of the Holy Ghost, ready now to be bestowed upon condition of obedience to the command, "Repent and be baptized," was valid, not simply to them, but to their descendants as well, and in fact to all men, however far removed from the likelihood of such a blessing—all men to whom the divine summons, "Repent and be baptized," should come. "For the promise"—these are his words—"is to you and to your children [posterity, descendants], and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

We thus exhaust, so I believe, the primary purpose of these words—that purpose of them which concerned Peter's immediate hearers only. This primary purpose was simply to encourage those hearers to obedience.

But a larger purpose of the words remains to be noted. Peter was that day using the power of the keys. He was opening the dispensation of the gospel, the new dispensation presided over by the Holy Ghost. It became him, therefore, to adapt his instructions to universal application. This no doubt was, as regarded the future, the paramount, though for the moment the secondary, purpose with which Peter appended the promise to his precept.

In accordance with this purpose he employed a form of language expressly directed to show that what he, Peter, thus taught inquiring Jewish listeners to the gospel at Jerusalem, was what inquiring listeners to the gospel, Jewish or Gentile, should thenceforth, everywhere and always, by whatsoever preacher, be taught. The following, in effect, is his language : "You ask us what you shall do. I reply, 'Repent and be baptized.' On this condition you shall be made—you together with us—partakers of the Holy Ghost. This is what the prophet Joel meant in the prediction of which I have been speaking. The prophet Joel predicted to the Israelites of his time that their sons and their daughters—their children, their descendants, that is to say—should receive an effusion of the Holy Ghost inspiring them to prophesy. This prediction is now in course of fulfillment before your eyes. What you this day behold in us, the apostles of Jesus, is a part of that fulfillment. But only a part, for the promise is also to you as well as to us. Repent and be baptized, and the blessing extends at once to you. Nor is this the whole : the same is true for your descendants as for yourselves. The precept, 'Repent and be baptized,' and the promise, 'You shall then receive the Holy Ghost,' are valid still for your posterity. The blessing and the condition of the blessing alike are for generation after generation succeeding you in a continuous line of descent till the end. But yet more : the application widens as well as lengthens.

It goes on all sides to Gentiles at the same time that it goes forward down to successive generations of Jews—one and the same thing to all men. Let every man ‘repent and be baptized,’ and every man thereupon shall receive the Holy Ghost—the same promise, on the same terms, of the same blessing, to all people of all times and all races.”

Such, substantially, was, as I understand it, the purport of Peter’s reply to his inquiring pentecostal hearers. Unless the light thus gathered from the promise to be reflected upon the precept has suffered some distortion from the straightness of the truth in passing through the lens of my interpretation, it is perfectly manifest that, however unmistakably present elsewhere in Scripture it may be, infant baptism is in no way, even remotely, to be detected in this particular passage. The explanation given seems to me to possess the self-evidencing power which belongs only to truth. The different explanation, widely, not to say generally, accepted among Pedobaptists, and on that account deserving serious and careful consideration—this different explanation, with the reasons—at least some of them—which I regard as conclusive against it, was presented in the preceding chapter. Candid readers, without prepossession, will have little difficulty in choosing between these two explanations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT COMMISSION: WHAT IT TEACHES CONCERNING BAPTISM

I

THE MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION, "TEACH ALL NATIONS"

THE Great Commission—so called—contained in the concluding verses of Matthew's Gospel consists of three parts: First, a kind of preface very briefly expressed; secondly, a triple command; and thirdly, a confirmatory promise. We have here to do only with the command. The command is in the following language: "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Greek for the first verb "teach" is a word peculiar, in this sense of it, to the New Testament. Ordinarily the verb means "to be a disciple" or "learner." It here means "to make a disciple" or "learner." We may awkwardly imitate the word by translating "disciple" instead of "teach."

Two questions now arise bearing upon the subject proposed in the present discussion: First, ex-

actly what is the import of the word "disciple," here used as a transitive verb? Secondly, what is the relation between the action expressed by the imperative, "disciple," and the actions expressed by the two participles following—namely, "baptizing," "teaching"? These two questions will respectively form the topics of the present chapter and a chapter to follow.

Our first question then is, Precisely what are we to understand by the word "disciple," here used as a verb? This, it may be remarked, is a point which the student familiar only with English is as well qualified to determine as is the Greek scholar. There is quite the same relation between the English noun and its derivative verb as between the two words corresponding in the original Greek. Convert the English noun "disciple" into a transitive verb, and you have done almost exactly what Jesus did with the Greek noun equivalent, when he said, "Disciple all the nations." He meant, "Make disciples of," just that and nothing else.

But now what does the noun "disciple" mean in the New Testament use of it? What the noun means will of course fix what the verb means. One of two things a "disciple" must be: either, first, a person who simply listens to a teacher for the purpose of understanding what the teacher says; or else, secondly, a person who, besides seeking to understand a teacher, takes the further step of adopting what the teacher teaches as true. Of these two senses, which does the word "disciple"

bear in the New Testament ? The answer is clear : The latter. "Disciple" in the New Testament means one who—ostensibly, at least—adopts the teachings of a teacher as true. If there is any case of exception to this rule, I at least do not know of any ; certainly in the immense majority of instances the rule holds good. The discrimination between the loose and the more strict application of the word is even very sharp. Take a few instances. Jesus had been speaking to large audiences. "The disciples," it is then recorded, "came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables ? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." This is in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. Here the distinction is tensely drawn between one class of hearers and another class. Of these two classes one class only are called "disciples," though both classes alike were hearers in the sense of listening to the teacher and seeking to understand what he taught. Again, in the fifteenth chapter of the same Gospel : "Jesus called his disciples unto him and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat." Here is a case in which the general mass of the Lord's hearers, although they had been with him in that relation three days, are markedly distinguished from his "disciples," strictly so called. Luke, in his fourteenth chapter, reports Christ speaking as follows : "If any man come to me, and

hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

From these instances (and the number might be multiplied, while no instance, I believe, can be adduced looking in a different direction) it will appear that the word "disciple," in the New Testament use of it, meant not a casual hearer of Christ, and not even a hearer that may have heard him day after day, but a hearer that, besides hearing him, at least professed acceptance of his doctrines. We hence gather that to "disciple" persons to a teacher meant to make those persons accept that teacher's doctrine for truth. If we examine the few other cases in which the same verb "disciple" occurs in the New Testament in a similar use, we shall find confirmation of this view. Thus in the fourteenth chapter of the Acts we meet with this: "And when they had evangelized [preached the gospel to] that city and had disciplined many." Here the general idea of proclaiming the gospel to multitudes of hearers is discriminated from the particular idea of "disciplining" certain ones out of the multitudes. We conclude with great confidence that when, in the Great Commission, Christ bade, "Disciple all the nations," his thought was not of proclaiming the gospel universally, so much as it was of everywhere making men accept the gospel.

To be sure the gospel was to be universally proclaimed. The idea of universality is contained in the expression "all the nations." Still the thing

that was to be universal is not proclaiming but discipling. All men were embraced in the command—no doubt of that; not, however, as persons to be made hearers merely of the gospel, but rather as persons to be made obedient hearers of the gospel—that is, disciples in the strict sense. Christ did not here enjoin preaching to all men, but discipling all men. Not the means—namely, preaching, teaching—but the end—namely, discipling, converting—was chiefly in his mind. It would not satisfy the conception of Christ for the apostles to run through the world of mankind announcing the gospel. Christ said, “Disciple all the nations,” not in the sense of making all the nations learn what he had taught, but in the sense of making all the nations believe what he had taught, and behave themselves accordingly. Make real disciples, make converted men, make Christians of all men. Not, Preach to everybody for the sake of making everybody Christian; but, Make everybody Christian. The intentness of the Lord’s mind led him to enjoin the end, not the means. His thought overleaped the intervening steps of method, and went at once to the result. He says nothing of how the thing was to be done. All he says is, Do the thing. And the thing he says do is to make of all men true, believing, obedient disciples. Thus much is rendered certain by the Saviour’s choice of the word “disciple” to express his thought.

We have now answered our first question—namely, just what is to be understood by the com-

mand, "Disciple all the nations," and are thus prepared to take up our second question, In what relation do the following participles, "baptizing," "teaching," stand to the principal imperative verb, "disciple"? This second question, however, is here postponed to be discussed in a separate chapter.

Let it not be supposed that so much care has been fruitlessly devoted to a barren verbal discussion. We are seeking the thought of Christ in an utterance of his as solemn and important as any recorded in the Bible. It is of supreme moment that we know what he meant. And what he meant in the whole of this weighty commandment depends very greatly upon what he meant in using that one particular word, "disciple," at the outset. The vital relation of that one particular word to the interpretation of what follows will be clearly seen when we come to consider our second question, which, having stated it, I reserve, as already suggested, for subsequent examination.

Before dismissing the question of the true meaning of "disciple," a remark or two may relevantly be made on a possible alternative sense for the word. The sense herein claimed for it may be held, while yet the baptizing is regarded as a means to the accomplishment of the discipling. This, however, is possible only on the presupposition of what is called baptismal regeneration ; in other words, the idea that the act of baptizing works a spiritual change in the subject apart from any share of his own in the

transaction. It is hardly worth while to argue with a person who takes this view ; at least I do not here suppose myself to be in discussion with such a person.

But there is a different sense of the word "disciple," which, if not scriptural and true, is certainly quite conceivable. The word "disciple" may conceivably mean, "Put under tuition," "Bring into the relation of disciple"; as, for instance, a Sunday-school teacher, having the missionary spirit, does by a child whom, found wandering uncared for on the street, he induces to enter his class for religious instruction. That child might be represented as having thus been made "disciple" in the superficial sense of "learner" merely.

This, I repeat, is a perfectly intelligible sense of the word rendered "teach" in the beginning of the Great Commission: "Teach all nations"; "Regard all nations, treat them, as disciples"; "Set them in a course of learning from Christ as Master, and keep them in it." Suppose this definition granted; why then go on to baptize? (For of course no one among "the nations" would submit to be baptized that had not first been made a "disciple," at least so far as to have learned that baptism was an article of the new teacher's instruction.) I say "go on to baptize"; for, observe, even according to this Pedobaptist definition of the word "teach" or "disciple," the discipling precedes the baptizing. "That is the way to treat people who have become disciples," Pedobaptists reply. Ad-

mitted. You baptize them *as* disciples. They *are* disciples, and you signify this when you baptize them.

There is thus after all no issue between Baptists and Pedobaptists as to the true order in time of discipleship and baptism. Both sides agree that discipleship is first. The real point in dispute is, What is discipleship in Christ's sense of the word "disciple," as here employed? Did Christ mean by, "Disciple all nations," merely this: "Put all nations under Christian instruction"? If so, then Baptists are surely wrong; but if so, then Pedobaptists surely are very inconsistent—that is to say, all Pedobaptists except Roman Catholics. Christ's Great Commission to his church, if the word in it, "Teach," "Make disciples of," means simply "Bring under Christian tuition," has never been obeyed, in its true logical inclusion, by any body of professed Christians but Roman Catholics. We, all of us, on this hypothesis, ought to baptize, as Rome does, by the nation and not by the individual. Baptism should not be limited to infants—much less to infants having Christian parents—but be extended, without exception, to all persons, whatever their age, who hear Christian instruction. This, and nothing short of this, is the logic of Pedobaptist exegesis. Here are the very words of a late quasi-authoritative apology for infant baptism: "And so there is nothing to show that 'discipling' the nations would not be wisely and thoroughly accomplished by 'baptizing' and 'teaching' them in the

very way in which other Christian denominations than Baptists [by eminence, the Church of Rome] now do—through preaching the gospel and by infant and adult baptism.”

In the presence of such doctrine from Pedobaptists, who is prepared to say that Baptist testimony, resisting unto “strict communion,” is not still needed on behalf of the principle of a regenerate church-membership? Sincere, thoughtful students of the New Testament will surely perceive that the question of the present chapter—namely, the real meaning of Christ’s word “disciple” in the Great Commission—is still one of vital moment to the Christian church.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT COMMISSION : WHAT IT TEACHES CONCERNING BAPTISM

II

THE RELATION BETWEEN "DISCIPLING" AND "BAPTIZING."

WE have examined the Great Commission to settle the meaning of "disciple" in it ; we are now to consider the relation between "discipling" and "baptizing," as this relation is exhibited in the same passage of Scripture. It will necessarily be a somewhat close and careful grammatical discussion, that upon which we thus enter. The discussion will not, however, be such as not to be quite intelligible to any average reader who will give his thought patiently to the subject.

In the Greek, as in the English, the three specifications which occur in the Great Commission are expressed by a verb followed by two participles. The verb is "disciple" ; the participles are "baptizing," "teaching." Whereas we have discussed a question of etymology, to ascertain the precise sense of "disciple," we come now to discuss a question of syntax, to ascertain the true relation in

which the two participles stand to the verb that precedes them.

If we confine our consideration to the verb and the participles alone, we shall find that, according to the laws of Greek grammar, any one of four distinguishable views may fairly be maintained.

First, it may be held that the participles express the *means* by which the action of the principal verb is to be effected; as if the passage read, "Disciple all the nations by baptizing them and by teaching them." Such is the view very commonly, if not prevailingly, maintained by Pedobaptist authorities. This view lends color of plausibility to the Pedobaptist doctrine concerning the proper order of precedence as between baptism and faith. If discipling is to be accomplished by baptizing as a means, why, clearly we can no longer deny that baptizing may justly sometimes precede faith in the subject. There even remains no reason why baptism should not be given to infants. In short, let the Pedobaptist interpretation of this passage once be shown to be not merely possible, but certain, and the Baptist position is effectually and finally overthrown. At least, under such an interpretation, I see but one way of still saving the Baptist position. That way is to hold that "baptizing" is used here by the Lord in a figure, to mean, not, primarily, the rite of baptism, but, primarily, what "baptizing" always presupposed—namely, the previous conversion of the subject. When a bereaved parent says, "I have buried my children," the meaning is not, primarily,

burial, but death presupposed in burial. No one can maintain that, in the case here under discussion, a similar figure of speech would be at all violent or unnatural; indeed, there is much to be said in favor of so understanding the language. Thus would be explained—what surely needs explanation—the occurrence of allusion to an outward rite in the Great Commission. But this interpretation, however the word “baptizing” be understood, cannot be demonstrated as certain, for the following reason at least, that there are several other interpretations equally tenable with that—equally tenable, I mean, on grounds of the Greek syntax for participles in connection with verbs. But there are other grammatical considerations than the law of the Greek participles—one consideration in particular about to be adduced—which make strongly against the Pedobaptist interpretation of this great passage. I advert meanwhile in passing to the absence of a connective between the participles. Note, it is not said, “baptizing and teaching,” but, “baptizing, teaching.” This asyndeton, or omission of the conjunction is not natural if the means of the discipling were intended to be pointed out in the participles. Let us insert a phrase unmistakably expressive of this instrumental idea, and we shall see: “Disciple all the nations by means of baptizing, teaching.” You feel at once that if the means were intended thus to be prescribed, it would have been far more natural to say, “Disciple all the nations by means of baptizing *and* teaching.” The

and, in fact, seems to me so much a matter of course, a thing so inevitable, between clauses designed in such a case to express means or method, that the absence of it is alone of weight enough to decide my own judgment against that interpretation which makes the participles in these verses instrumental.

Before bringing forward an additional circumstance looking in the same direction, and before giving what I think to be the true interpretation of the passage, I wish, for the sake of full presentation, to state the two other interpretations of it which the law of Greek participles used in connection with finite forms of the verb would, considered exclusively by itself, recognize as admissible. One of these makes the verb "disciple" first give in general the action which the two participles following then divide into constituent parts. According to this interpretation, the sense is, "Disciple all the nations," that is, to be more explicit, "baptize them," "teach them." The absence of the conjunction weighs as strongly against this interpretation as it does against the interpretation first considered. If the participles had been meant to give the parts, two in number, making up the whole of the action prescribed in "disciple," there would almost certainly have been between them the connective *and*. It would have read somewhat like this: "Disciple all the nations; by which I mean, 'Baptize them and teach them.' " The other interpretation depends on the fact that Greek participles so connected with a finite verb may express

actions consecutive to the action of that. Interpreting in accordance with this possibility, we should have the following sense : “ Begin by making all the nations disciples ; proceed by baptizing these, and complete your work by instructing them to a perfect obedience.” That such is indeed *substantially* the sense of the passage I have no doubt. This however is ascertained, not by the necessary relation of the participles to the verb, but by certain considerations of probability found both within the passage itself and without. The cases in which the Greek participles are manifestly employed in connection with finite verbs for the purpose of expressing actions consecutive to the actions expressed by the verbs—though such do, I believe, occur—I have not found to be very abundant. For my own part, I do not maintain this view of the present passage, although this view is probably the favorite one with Baptists, as it is also the view most likely to occur to any chance intelligent reader of the English translation.

There is a fourth view—that one which I hold to be the true view—yet to be stated. This fourth view regards the participles as expressing actions not of necessity rigidly consecutive to the action expressed by the imperative verb, but actions connected with it—actions not necessarily constituting together the whole sum of the action expressed by the principal verb, but actions virtually contained in that ; in short, this view regards the participles as being what we may call circumstantial participles.

The asyndeton, or absence of the conjunctive word between the participles, strongly favors this view as the one applicable to the present case. The sense is, "Disciple all the nations, not omitting to baptize them, and give them when disciplined and baptized thorough subsequent indoctrination to obedience." Such I have little doubt is the true meaning, and the true grammar as well, of this passage. The first participle, "baptizing," goes with the imperative, "disciple" to complement the meaning of that. The second participle, "teaching," goes with the whole complex expression, "Disciple, baptizing," to make that complete. The "disciple" is not complete without the "baptizing," and the "disciple, baptizing" is not complete without the "teaching." Thus the asyndeton is most naturally accounted for.

And now for another grammatical consideration embraced within the passage itself. "Disciple all the nations," says Christ; "baptizing them," he proceeds. Baptizing whom? "Why all the nations," the English reader promptly replies; "there is no antecedent for 'them' except 'all the nations.'" This seems quite clear to the reader of the English Bible. But the student of the Greek Testament knows that in absolute strictness of grammatical concord the "them" cannot have "all the nations" for its antecedent. The difference of gender forbids. "Nations" is in Greek a neuter noun, while "them" is a masculine pronoun. Now undoubtedly the grammar of the biblical Greek per-

mits us to reason that the sense of the noun rather than its technical gender may dictate the gender of the pronoun representing it. But in the present instance it is worthy of note that the Greek verb "disciple" is made from a masculine noun. The Greek verb "disciple," accordingly, with its masculine noun "disciple" implicit in its very form as well as its sense, may have furnished to the thought of the Saviour the conception which dictated the pronoun after "baptizing" and after "teaching." Christ was not thinking of "all the nations" but of "the disciples" made out of "all the nations," when he said "baptizing them." Those out of all the nations, who had been made disciples in that strict sense of the word already described, were then to be first baptized and afterward taught. The form of the Greek pronoun "them" helps to make it probable that what in the Saviour's mind supplied the pronoun was not the idea of all the nations spoken of as the objects of the discipling, but rather the idea of the disciples thus to be made out from all the nations. Who then are to be baptized? Why, those who have been disciplined. If literally "all the nations," still all the nations conceived as having been rendered disciples—disciples indeed.

Thus does this passage fall easily and naturally into perfect accord with the teaching of the rest of revelation on the subject of belief before baptism. It is not too much to say that there is nothing in Scripture that, rightly understood, has even the look of favoring Pedobaptism.

CHAPTER X

OBEDIENCE AND COMMON SENSE

BAPTISTS believe strongly in obedience, but not less strongly they believe also in common sense ; they could not be the scripturalists they are if they did not. "Common sense" is a broad mark branded everywhere on the face of the Bible, and inseparably water-lined into its texture. Unless a man has some common sense, and uses it, he cannot know the Bible aright. Other things being equal, the more common sense a man has the better he will know his Bible.

These commonplace remarks were first suggested by a spirited attempt once made to turn the Baptist position by showing that the spirit of obedience is as good to discharge Pedobaptists from blame for being sprinkled when Christ says, "Be baptized," as it is to discharge Baptists from blame for not insisting on a baptized baptizer in their act of submitting to baptism. "It is clearly implied"—so, in the spirit of the *argumentum ad hominem*, our opponents sometimes pleasantly assure us—"it is clearly implied in the Bible to be Christ's will that the baptizer should himself have been baptized, and you Baptists insist, you know, that 'to the spirit of obedience the clearly implied will of

Christ is just as binding as his expressed will is.' How then are not Baptists as far wrong to receive baptism from persons not in an unbroken succession of the properly baptized, beginning with the apostles, as Pedobaptists are in making infant sprinkling do for adult immersion?" But of course the real meaning of this is that neither Baptists nor Pedobaptists are wrong at all in the matter. Both parties are quite right, provided only they think they are quite right. It is sufficient, equally for them both, to do what they think is sufficient. Think you obey, and you do obey. Such is the easy-going gospel of obedience preached by these brethren.

Now the common sense of the matter seems to me to be this: Christ says, "Be baptized." He does not say "Be baptized" by such or such a person, or by a person so or so qualified. In fact, there are clear indications that there is comparative indifference as to the person, *in baptizing*. Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples. Paul did not baptize with his own hands, but by the hands of some anonymous baptizers. The person *who*, in *being baptized*, is of prime consequence. This person is to have repented and believed. Of course there are decent limits within which indifference as to the baptizer must be confined. These limits common sense and the spirit of obedience appoint. Thus much is implied—nothing more—as to the will of Christ in this matter.

Most certainly, all persons who baptize ought

themselves to be baptized persons. But this is true also of all other persons whatever as well. That we should insist in all proper ways on everybody's obedience at this point is unquestionable. That we should insist in the particular way of refusing to be baptized by a man without that qualification on his part is by no means so certain. It is to be left to the spirit of obedience and common sense to decide.

There may be a distinction not without a difference between having the spirit to do what you think is commanded and having the spirit to do what actually is commanded. If a man tells us, "Put oil on the fire," and we understand him, "Put water on the fire," and go about doing this, we cannot be said to have the spirit of putting on oil, when we are actually with intelligent purpose putting on water. If on the other hand we rightly understand the direction, but seize the vessel of water, inadvertently mistaking it for the vessel of oil, then we may truly be said to have the spirit of putting on oil, even when as matter of fact we do put on water.

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the spirit to obey a particular command unless that command is rightly understood. There may indeed be a general wish to do what a master requires; but self-evidently there can be no disposition to do a particular thing commanded, when that particular thing is either not known or not understood. In this sense, unless the command, "Be

baptized," is understood as the Lord meant it, there is no spirit of obedience exercised toward that exact command. All which is perhaps barren, but it is certainly axiomatic.

Here, however, is something equally axiomatic, and not barren. If the command is, "Do an act," and you not only have never done it, but have never had the least intention of doing it, then that command you have never met either with obedience or with even the spirit of obedience. This is the situation in which the great mass of all Pedobaptists stand with reference to the command, "Be baptized." An act is commanded which they have never performed, and which they have not now, and which they never had, the smallest purpose to perform. It is not uncharitable therefore—it is simply true—to say that toward this commandment of an act from them themselves they have never exercised the spirit of obedience. They have not done what is "sufficient"—they have not even done what they think is "sufficient"—for they have never done anything whatever toward the obeying of this commandment. They have simply said, "I am baptized"; for they cannot say that they ever did anything whatever in the premises. A particular act is commanded to them, and they say, "Some one else once did something else." And this is claimed to be not only the spirit of obedience, but obedience itself!

A Pedobaptist editor some years ago quoted from a Baptist editor as follows :

“If a person giving evidence of piety who has been solemnly immersed, on a profession of his faith, by an administrator believed by the candidate to be authorized to perform the rite, and who was satisfied with his baptism, applied for membership, we have recommended his reception by the church. . . He had obeyed Christ.”

The Pedobaptist editor then exclaimed :

“But behold a snag ! If the baptism is sufficient baptism because it is believed by the subject of it to be sufficient, then why is not sprinkling sufficient baptism when it is believed by the subject of it to be sufficient ? . . . Still further, is not infant baptism sufficient when it is believed by the subject of it to be sufficient ? . . . There can be no doubt of it.”

Now is it possible that this was unconscious legerdemain ? Probably ; for that Pedobaptist editor meant to be candid and honorable, at the same time that he would by no means fail to be bright and ingenious. But observe : The Baptist editor describes a baptism circumstantially : it is a profession of faith, it is solemnly administered, it is immersion, it is done by a person believed to be qualified ; and the point is incidentally added that the subject is satisfied with his baptism. Hereupon the critic, dropping everything that is essential, and holding only the one thing that is incidental, proceeds to infer that on the same principle anything or nothing is “sufficient,” if the subject is “satisfied.” For in the case of one sprinkled in infancy the subject

has done nothing—absolutely nothing—but at an indefinite later period to be “satisfied” with having done nothing. And this is “obedience,” and the “answer of a good conscience” !

Truly, a little less metaphysics and a little more common sense would improve the quality of our obedience.

If Christ had said “Be baptized by one duly baptized,” then certainly he would have laid a heavy burden on his babes, to find out so difficult a point beyond the possibility of an error ; but the duty of obedience would still be plain. As it is, he has simply bidden, “Be baptized.” The way of obedience is for those bidden to rise up and obey, not to sit still and be “satisfied.”

CHAPTER XI

COMMON SENSE AND BAPTISM

THE questions which divide Baptists and Pedobaptists are very simple questions: What is baptism? Who should be baptized? Two simpler questions it would be hard to devise. The plain common sense of any man you should chance to meet might safely be entrusted to answer them. Prepossessions aside, and the Bible, the English Bible, the only resort, there could scarcely be different answers. Different answers, however, there are, for resort is had elsewhere than to the Bible, and prepossessions are not put aside. Let us return once more to the Bible alone, and let us, if we can, put aside our prepossessions. To endeavor to rid the candid and intelligent Pedobaptist mind of certain natural but misleading misconceptions concerning the Baptist position, and then to exhibit that position according to fact and in the clearest possible light, in short, according to what I may call the method of common sense, will be the object of the present chapter.

I seek to have my brother take my point of view; it will be but fair to begin by showing my brother that I can take his point of view. This, then, I suppose to be the customary Pedobaptist

way of considering the questions at issue. It is as if our Pedobaptist brethren said to us: "Granted now, good friends, that your peculiar views are right; still, why, pray, make such manifold ado about them? Wherein can you find their extraordinary value and significance? There you are, occupying the position of separatists. Separatists for what? Why—who would believe it?—for a mere question, forsooth, of more water or less, how applied and when, in the matter of baptism. Except in those trifles you are one with the great Christian world. Is it, can it be, worth while, on points such as these, which concern only a ritual observance at most, to rend the body of Christ and to hold yourselves aloof from your brethren in an attitude of protest and rebuke? Are there not weightier matters of Christ's law that should attract and absorb your attention? It really does seem to us all a kind of pettiness and narrowness in you, this literalizing and ritualizing on your part, ill becoming a body of Christians in whom we are delighted to recognize, in other regards, so many claims on our respect and affection."

If I have succeeded at all in taking the point of view from which our Pedobaptist brethren are accustomed to regard our position, I may now, perhaps, ask them to take the point of view from which we are accustomed to regard our position ourselves.

And at the outset, in the way of preface, it needs to be said that their great organizing princi-

ple—of obedience to Christ—would make Baptists stand for any points of Christ's commandment, even if those points were indeed such and so small and so apparently insignificant as their Pedobaptist brethren not unnaturally conceive the points insisted upon by Baptists respecting baptism to be. But those points of Christ's commandment which make us Baptists are not such, and they are not so small, and they are not so insignificant.

They are not such ; for it is not true that Baptists stickle for quantity of water in baptism. Quantity of water, more or less, is to us as much a matter of indifference as it is to our Pedobaptist brethren. We ask, as they do, simply for so much as may suffice to perform the act. We are amply satisfied with more or with less, as occasion serves, provided only we have enough to accomplish the ordinance "Be baptized." The sufficient supply may be found in an ocean or it may be found in a baptistery. The one quantity contents us just as well as the other.

In the next place, it is not at all with Baptists a question of mode. The mode of the act is, like the quantity of water used in performing the act, to us a point of total unconcern. We resemble our Pedobaptist brethren in accounting one mode of baptism equally valid with another. Like them, we seek simply to perform the act in whatever mode seems to us best to become the decorum of the solemn occasion. We may baptize the obedient subject with his face downward, to welcome the

wave which submerges him ; or with his face upward, to receive the smile of the ascended Lord whom he obeys. We may baptize him from an erect or from a kneeling posture. We may baptize him in a single or in a threefold act. Such choices in mode are by no means disapproved by Baptists. We seek only to obey the command " Be baptized," in whatever quantity of water may answer that purpose, according to whatever mode of administration judgment or custom may recommend. In how much water, according to what mode—these matters are of no more moment to us than to others.

Again, as to the time *when*, in baptism, there too we are very much of the same mind with our brethren of other evangelical churches. These all choose, I believe, the earliest convenient moment after the subject is regarded as fit to receive baptism, or, as it is better expressed, to be baptized. Pedobaptists baptize (let us indulge the term) their children as soon as deemed suitable after their children's birth ; we observe the same rule. The difference between them and us is that they, in fixing the time of their baptism, reckon from the moment of first, or natural birth ; we, in fixing the time of our baptism, reckon from the moment of second, or spiritual birth.

In one word, and as plainly as possible, the really great question between Baptists and Pedobaptists is something quite apart and distinct from the points thus far considered. That question is, WHO shall be baptized ? not, In how much water ? nor, Ac-

according to what mode ? nor yet, At what time ? A subordinate question of very considerable importance would still remain after this chief question was answered. Having decided WHO are to be baptized, we should next have to decide WHAT baptism is.

For a moment, however, let baptism be an unknown term. From the form of the word employed, we simply know that baptism is an action ; what action it is, remains, we will suppose, wholly indeterminate.

Our first question then is, WHO shall be baptized ? But why should any be baptized ? Evidently, because a commandment of Christ exists to that effect ; and evidently for no other reason in the world. In what form of language is the commandment expressed ? In various forms of language, of one agreeing import, but most directly, most simply, most briefly, and most explicitly, in a single Greek word, translated, or rather transferred, by two words in English—namely, “ Be baptized.” Here then is an imperative verb in the second person, of uncertain significance, let us say, as to the action prescribed by it, but of perfectly certain significance as to the person or persons who are to perform the action. It is the persons addressed ; from the nature of the case, from the universal laws of human language, it can be no other than they. Whatever “ being baptized ” may mean, the commandment “ Be baptized ” can be obeyed only by the person to be baptized. If any one else

undertakes to obey it, the result simply is that one *has* somebody baptized—an action which might be obedience if the command were, “*Have* such or such a person baptized,” but which, the commandment being “Be baptized,” is no obedience at all. The commandment “Be baptized” *can* therefore be obeyed only by one capable of understanding, first, that something is *commanded*; secondly, that that something is commanded *him*; and thirdly, *what* that something commanded is. The commandment “Be baptized” will be obeyed only by one who, besides being capable of so understanding, is likewise disposed to obey the commandment. The person to be baptized (whatever baptism is) must be both intelligent and obedient. Obedience to the commandment is, on any other conditions, simply a thing impossible and inconceivable.

We arrive at this conclusion—namely, the conclusion that only the person spoken to in the words “Be baptized” can possibly do what therein is directed to be done, and that that person can obey in doing it only as he knows what is directed and has the purpose to comply—this conclusion, I say, we arrive at without resort to the context in which the commandment stands, solely from the necessary, the inevitable, force of the one Greek word and the two English words in which the commandment is couched. There is no evading the conclusion by any art of interpretation whatever. The conclusion resides immovably and impreguably in the very form itself, irrespective of the meaning, of the com-

mandment. It is needless to say, though it may of course truly be said, that the context confirms the conclusion in almost every practicable way. Persons may unquestionably be baptized—that is, dipped, sprinkled, “poured” (the barbarism seems necessary)—in the bare literal sense of the word employed, either by their own motion or by the motion of others—that is, either voluntarily or involuntarily; this is quite possible; but no such baptism is baptism in the sense of the words constituting the commandment, “Be baptized,” unless the subject consciously consents to it, and does so for the purpose in his heart of fulfilling the will of Christ. Conscious obedience alone converts the else bald physical fact into that which we have learned to mean and to understand when we say or hear the word “baptism.” A man might as well try to stare the sun out of countenance as to deny this, or to gainsay it, or to ignore it, with the New Testament before his eyes and with his senses in his head.

Lastly, *What* is baptism? As has already been said, no less complicated question ever was asked, no question, considered by itself alone, less susceptible of being variously answered. Let us remember that we are seeking now for the nature of the outward act implied in baptism. The element of obedience in it may be left out of account; the nature of the outward act will be the same with or without obedience. What then is the physical action denoted by the Greek word “baptism”

(for "baptism" is simply a Greek word made English)? Lexicographers with one accord reply, "Immersion." (Some few of them, perhaps, but not the most enlightened, admit other meanings.)

Pedobaptists treat baptism as if in the New Testament it meant "application of water to the person." If this were the meaning, immersion would still be valid indeed as baptism, but equally valid would be sprinkling or pouring. Manifestly water may be applied in any one of these three ways. But what is the fact about the meaning of the Greek word "baptism"?

There is a view of plain common sense which it needs no Greek scholarship to appreciate. Every language naturally has a word to mean "dip," a word to mean "sprinkle," and a word to mean "pour," for the obvious reason that all these actions are common everywhere and need to be spoken of. Every language naturally too has a word to mean "moisten," "dampen," "wet." This latter word in any language would be vague enough to include within its scope every form of applying water that should result in *wetting* the object to which the water was applied. Now if Christ meant, "Have water applied to your person," when he said through Peter, "Be baptized," why did he not use this more vague, less determinate word? Or if he sometimes used the specific word which means "be dipped" in a loose way for the general direction, "Have yourself wetted," how does it happen that he never in any instance used the spe-

cific word which would mean "Be sprinkled" in a similarly loose way for the same general direction? Is it probable that Christ, always meaning loosely "Be wetted," would always say strictly, "Be dipped"? The emblematic import attributed in the New Testament to baptism of course still further fixes the real meaning of a word that was however in no need of having its meaning further fixed.

Let Baptists then not be misunderstood to be mere sticklers for a little more water in baptism or for a particular mode of baptizing. What Baptists stand for is obedience to Christ in everything, and, with the rest, for obedience to Christ in the matter of being baptized.

I reserve for subsequent chapters, those numbered XX. and XXI., the unfolding of what I believe to be the vast, the almost incalculable, practical importance of the Baptist principle in its application to baptism, as the importance of that principle thus applied is illustrated in nineteen centuries of church history.

CHAPTER XII

COMMON SENSE AND "CLOSE COMMUNION"

THERE is logic and there is common sense. Right logic and sound common sense always agree. Logic, however, is speculative and formal, while common sense deals with substance and is practical. Common sense, therefore, hugging the ground is a safer guide to conduct than pure logic flying in the air.

It has often been shown, as it is very easy to show, that in the matter of intercommunion at the Lord's Supper the practice of American Baptists is logical. It is the object of the present chapter to show further that that practice is also marked by common sense.

Not to imply any opposition, for there is none, between logic and common sense, I yet am tempted to say that what is known as Landmarkism, if I understand Landmarkism at all, is, in its best estate, nothing else in the world than logic with a good deal of conscience in it, even when most wrong in its premises, but without enough of the saving salt of common sense. Perhaps the same might be said of Sabbatarianism as exemplified in the Seventh-day Baptists.

Now, as already hinted, "close communion"—

to accept here for the moment the name by which its opponents are fond of calling the Baptist usage with respect to communion—close communion is undoubtedly logical, as far as it goes. But close communion, it is sometimes urged, does not go to the end of the logical road. It stops short at a half-way house, we are told. Follow your road to the end, and come out at Landmarkism, is the exhortation that, spoken now in the tone of good faith, and now in the tone of irony, we Baptists hear on different sides. We are thus alternately encouraged to advance firmly from our premises to the smiling legitimate conclusion ; or bidden retrace our way in recoil from a yawning *reductio ad absurdum* and incontinently abandon our premises altogether. Let us permit ourselves, in considering the point raised, to use language as if common sense enjoyed a privilege of criticising logic.

So speaking we inquire, Is it best, granted that you have found logical roads, still is it best always to follow logical roads to their ends? Is it not common sense sometimes to stop midway? In other words, should we, as a matter of course and without misgiving, practically draw out and convert into conduct all the consequences that may theoretically be contained in our principles? While there is never any real conflict between sound logic and true common sense, while common sense never negatives a speculative conclusion of logic, yet may not common sense sometimes judiciously advise logic to let a particular conclusion sleep undisturbed

in her premises? On a point of common sense, supposed for the moment to be something other than logic, what, for instance, is the wisest course to adopt with respect to this question of the relation to us Baptists of Pedobaptist bodies? Shall we say with the Landmarkers: "They are not baptized, they are not churches, we will not recognize them in any way whatever as being that which they certainly are not? Logic does more than require that we refrain from communion with them as not having been baptized. Logic equally requires that we guard ourselves at a score of other points from treating them as churches, which without baptism they assuredly cannot be."

Shall we, I ask, hold this language with the Landmarkers? Or shall we go with English open-communion Baptists in saying: "Nay, we will neither refuse to commune with our unbaptized brethren, nor, more illiberal still, refuse to confess them true churches of Christ. We will simply, by word of mouth or of pen, maintain our testimony on behalf of that command of our Lord which prescribes baptism, as we maintain our testimony on behalf of any other command of his obedience to which is not an essential of salvation. We will not erect the observance of the Lord's Supper into that which Christ never designed it to be, a breakwater for the integrity and safety of his ordinance of baptism."

Which now—I renew my question—which one of these two contrasted views of Baptist relation to Pedobaptists shall we adopt? Or shall we find

between these two a third view that is better than either? Better, because with more common sense in it, if, peradventure, with apparently less logic. Let us consider.

What are the objections to the English Baptists' way? Well, in the first place, that way has no advantage over ours in being at all more logical. If it were true, as Landmarkers contend, that we falter and pause in the right road, refusing to follow it to the end, no less certainly is it true that our English brethren do the same—at least that section (constantly, instructively, diminishing) of our English brethren who welcome unbaptized to the Lord's table, but not to church-membership. Our English brethren, all of them, ought logically to admit to church-membership as freely as they admit to the Lord's Supper. For manifestly it is logic, that if you do not decline to sit at the Lord's Supper with the unbaptized, so neither should you decline to enter with the unbaptized into any ecclesiastic relations whatever. What element or incident is there in common or fellow church-membership that is not contained by implication in the act of inter-communion? Is it not absurd to perform the supreme act of external church fellowship with persons whom you nevertheless refuse to receive into church fellowship, that is, whom you refuse to admit as members of your ecclesiastical body? What does full membership signify, that is worth considering even a moment, beyond what is already signified in the act of communion?

Many of our English brethren have felt the force of these questions, and have gone the natural next step on their logical road. I sat once in a prominent Baptist church of London. Before the service began I asked an intelligent gentleman by my side, a member of the church, "Is this an open-communion church?" "Oh, yes," he promptly replied, "open-communion, and open-membership too." In my innocent ignorance of such a state of things—the incident in question occurred many years ago; there has been much progress made since, and what was comparatively singular then is very common now—I did not understand the meaning of the expression. He explained that the church not merely admitted to communion professing Christians that had not been baptized, but admitted such to membership as well. I confess it was then, and I confess it is still, difficult for me to conceive how a church so made up could call itself Baptist. But the digestion of inconsistencies is one of the singular capacities of the human intellect.

In point of logical consistency then the English way, that is the ancient English way, is no better than the American way. I mean the English way consisting in open-communion connected with refusal of formal co-membership. To say, You may commune with us, but we will not let you join our church, is at least as illogical as it is to say, You shall not commune with us, but otherwise we will recognize you as churches of Christ. I am now setting

forth the common sense, not the logic, of the question, and so I do not care to insist that this latter way, which is our American way, is unimpeachably logical. Suppose it were not. Still it is as logical as the former way, which used to be the English way. Which way is more logical, is not so important to settle as which way has more common-sense in its favor. And neither of these two points has any importance whatever, except as right settlement may serve to make clear which way agrees better with the mind of Christ.

The way which for convenience we may continue to call the English way certainly tends to obliteration of the Baptist peculiarity of view; which of course is no matter unless the Baptist peculiarity of view is also the scriptural peculiarity of view. The English way seems to say one of two things, both of which make against true Baptist doctrine, that is, as we cannot doubt, against true Christian doctrine. It says, either, Baptism is not so very important, or else, Your baptism will do very well. But baptism, with its inseparably associated tenet of regenerate church-membership, is important; else why do Baptist churches exist? Something other than baptism will not do; else, again, why do Baptist churches exist? Shall we invite people to commune with us in order orally to teach them on the occasion that they ought to be baptized, and that they have not been? That would be queer comity toward our brethren. Shall we invite them to communion with us by way of indicating that

we do not care about their obeying Christ in baptism? That would be strange loyalty toward the Lord. Is it not common sense, common sense in no way discordant with logic, to do differently, to refrain from inviting to communion with us those who have not been baptized, on the simple and intelligible ground of their not having been baptized, and let that inoffensive and unobtrusive act of silently *not* doing, stand for a part of our perpetual testimony on behalf of a neglected ordinance of our Lord, the widespread neglect of which is the very reason of our denominational existence? To go further and say, You are not churches because you have not been baptized, might be logical, but it would not have common sense on its side. It would not simply separate us from our brethren; it would insulate us. It may, indeed, be that all this is logically involved in our denominational position. Such a logical implication I am not in the least careful to deny; but I am, on the other hand, very careful not to affirm it. Just here is a point at which common sense rejoices against logic. As long as the offensive conclusion lies silent in our premises, it may be never so obvious, it cannot justly offend. If we do not ourselves draw the conclusion, if only our brethren find it, as a discovery of their own, in our premises, then *we* shall not seem to be exclusive; it will be the *truth* that excludes.

In short, the present usage of American Baptists in respect to communion seems to me both to be

logical as far as it goes, and to go as far as common sense recommends. We stand at just that point at which we are at once safe from the immediately hindering, and the eventually disintegrating, tendency of the English practice, and safe as well from the insulating and narrowing effect of exclusivism like that of the Landmarkers. Restricted communion seems necessary to keep us permanently Baptists, that is, permanently a body of witnesses, such as is not to be dispensed with, for the integrity of the gospel ; and abstinence from Landmarkism seems necessary to bring us into such relation to other communities of Christians that our conforming and assimilating influence may have a chance to exert itself effectively upon them. In a word, present American Baptist practice is logical but not too logical. It obeys Christ not so much in the spirit of enslavement through logic, as in the spirit of enfranchisement through common sense.

And now for a few obvious applications of this doctrine of common sense, so to speak correcting logic, as to the question of communion. Mark, I do not by any means admit that what logic is now represented as saying, she is really entitled to say. But waiving that point of dispute, I have put logic as it were under tuition with common sense. Logic may perhaps say, You must not call those bodies churches which are made up of Christians not baptized. Common sense says, Call them churches, since here is a point at which comity is more serviceable to the truth than strictness would be.

Logic may say, Do not countenance exchanges of pulpits with ministers, so styled, that are not baptized. Common sense says, Nay, exchange freely with them, since it is more helpful to the best cause that they be recognized in their character of good preachers of righteousness, than that they be ignored in their character of not perfect preachers of righteousness. In the same view, scruple not to call them ministers—since ministers they certainly are, in the best, the non-technical, sense of that much-misused name. Logic may say, Admit nothing to be baptism that is not baptism administered by hands themselves duly baptized. Common sense says, Admit anything to be baptism that is baptism, however administered, in the sense of obeying Christ in his command, Be baptized. Then if logic, chafed at being overruled by common sense, turns suddenly upon common sense, and pushes her, saying: Very well, if you approve going so far, then approve going farther still, and open the Lord's table to all whom in these various ways you practically confess to be Christians—Nay, rejoins common sense, with her imperturbable good-nature, not so, Dame Logic; I indeed make concessions apparently against you in favor of truth, but when it comes to concessions that would work truth an injury, then I halt and stand fast. My post is just this: I will not invite to communion with me those who have not been baptized, and I will not accept from those who have not been baptized invitations to commune with them. In-

structed by Scripture, and no less by reason and by history, I here take my position and hold it. I cannot do otherwise, for at this point I feel set for the defense of a part, and an important part, of the gospel.

I will not say, I need not say, that logic is wrong in using her language ; but I do say, and it seems to me wise to say, that common sense is right in using hers.

CHAPTER XIII

A MODERN PSEUD-APOSTOLIC EPISTLE

UNDER the heading, "Paul to the Modern Galatians," a newspaper article of some years ago undertakes to dispose at a stroke of those whom it calls "ritualists in all denominations." "Somewhat thus"—so this article imagines—"would St. Paul to-day address himself to these who still bend themselves about Mount Sinai." And then it goes on to frame a lively and ingenious parody of "St. Paul's" ("Paul's" instead of "St. Paul's," better suits the non-ritualizing taste) Epistle to the Galatians, adjusting it to the supposed current phases of the Galatian tendency apparent among us of this country and age.

The parody of Paul's letter thus furnished no doubt was furnished in perfect good faith on the part of the author. I readily assume that the author really conceived himself to have faithfully represented the true original Pauline ideas on the subject discussed, and I accordingly treat the implied argument with seriousness and candor in reply.

The treatment may properly be confined to two points only in the manifold indictment brought against various Christian bodies for ritualism on

their part. Those two points concern the two Christian ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The journalistic pseudo-Paul uses the following language :

"Why are ye again entangled in the yoke of bondage? Why are ye making the loving memorials of Christ's death, or the symbol of the cleansing of your sins, a test and a stumbling-block? It is not the slavery of water or wine or bread which Christ enjoins; but he offers the love and freedom of sons. I would they were not only dipped but drowned that trouble you."

In prefacing the pseudo-Pauline epistle the writer says :

Paul "had to repeat it in every form that Christianity was all spirit; that Christ had come to redeem us from slavery to the ordinances which neither we nor our fathers could bear; and that not one—absolutely not one—of the merely outward and physical adjuncts of religion was now binding—not circumcision, not sacrifice, not holy days. Everything was done away and all that was required was the spirit of love and obedience."

Now as I have been accustomed to read Paul, he never once said in any form, and of course therefore he could not "repeat in every form," that "Christianity was all spirit." Paul was a great deal too well balanced in his mental constitution, a great deal too earnestly practical in his religious spirit, ever to say such a foolish and misleading thing as that. He insisted on the spirit, but he insisted

too, and not less, on the manifestation of the spirit. This is the explanation of Paul's innumerable perceptive exhortations occurring in his letters applicable to every-day life. Paul was no legalist, but he was also no sentimentalist. The practical interest is always and everywhere supreme in his writings. His doctrine was all for the sake of life. Life is spirit to be sure ; but life is conduct as well, according to Paul, and according to the unanimous and emphatic consent of Scripture. A falser and more mischievous representation of Paul's teaching than to say of it that it made "Christianity all spirit" could hardly be contrived ; unless it were to say of it that it made Christianity all outward behavior. Paul's teaching did neither the one nor the other of these things. It married spirit and letter in indivisible unity.

By happy unconscious self-dispatch, the writer recognizes the truth of these statements when he says, "All that was required was the spirit of love and obedience." Yes, that indeed is all ; "the spirit of love" first, and then "obedience." This is Paul, and this is Christ, and this in short is Scripture. But if "obedience" means anything additional to "love" then Christianity is not "all spirit." Obedience is at least something in Christianity. Or does our writer mean the "spirit of love and [of] obedience" ? Well that indeed turns all into "spirit," and saves for the writer his consistency, but at the expense of his logically inconsistent fidelity to truth. For as the spirit of love

loves, so the spirit of obedience obeys. It is pure sentimentalism—or worse, it is sentimentalism not pure but mixed with antinomianism—that rests satisfied with the spirit of love without loving, or with the spirit of obedience without obeying. It is a tendency abhorrent from Paul. We seem to hear Paul utter, at encounter of it, his fervent deprecatory “God forbid !”

It is true enough, as the pseudo-Paul says, that “it is not the slavery of water or wine or bread which Christ enjoins.” But how is it that we escape the “slavery” ? Is it by disregarding the command, “Baptize,” or the commands, “Drink” and “Eat” ? Is it not rather by regarding these commands—regarding them in the loyal spirit of love ? Disregarding them is not freedom, it is only disobedience ; and disobedience sooner or later is always bondage. So Adam found, to his cost and to ours. The way to freedom is the way of obedience. If Christ had said, “Be Jews and observe Moses’ ceremonial requirements,” then the way to freedom would be through strict obedience to this command, and consequent observance of the Mosaic ritual. But Christ taught Paul, “Disuse the Mosaic ritual ; practise it no longer.” Obedience still is our freedom, and we obey by ceasing to ritualize according to Moses. We repeat, if Christ had said, “Go on ritualizing according to Moses,” then our duty, and our liberty no less, would lie in ritualizing according to Moses. Christ did not say this, but the contrary. He did, however, say, “Baptize,”

“Be baptized,” “Eat,” and “Drink.” A new ritualism, if you please to call it such. It is binding however for the very same reason that the old ritualism ceased to the Jews to be binding—namely, the authority of Christ.

Christ was the end of the law—the old law ; good reason, therefore, for the old law’s ceasing to be in force after the “It is finished” of Calvary. Christ was the beginning and the source of this new law ; good reason therefore for Christ’s saying, “Do this” (“till he come” is Paul’s own clause of continuing obligation), “disciple, *baptize*, teach” ; “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

I confess it has always seemed to me so absurd as to be absolutely incomprehensible, that intelligent Christian men should continue to observe *a* ritual, and pretend to slight *the* ritual. If baptism is nothing, why, pray, practise baptism ? If the Lord’s Supper is nothing why, in the name of reason, continue to observe the Lord’s Supper ? The essence of a ritual act, its spirit, lies in its being the act prescribed. If the act is of no consequence then the rite itself—for the rite consists in the act—is of no consequence. Why go on to perform a rite which you ceaselessly proclaim to be nothing ? One can understand ritualism like that of Rome ; one can understand anti-ritualism like that of the Quaker ; one can understand obedience like that which, either well-informed or misinformed, most evangelical Christians attempt to practise ; but that

nondescript something which is neither ritualism nor anti-ritualism, nor yet obedience—since it does *an* act, but disdains to do *the* act ; which says by its words that *the* rite is of no account, while saying by its practice that *a* rite is indispensably important—this unnamable somewhat, one is compelled indeed to recognize as undoubtedly existing, for it stares one in the face from many a printed page of Christian polemics ; but this—I make my confession with candor—this I cannot understand. It agrees well, however, with the inconsiderateness that could permit its subject to talk about “ordinances which neither we nor our fathers could bear” ; as if forsooth either “we” or “our fathers” had ever had anything the least to do with “bearing” the ordinances of the Mosaic economy ! It agrees well too, with that released spirit of superiority to well-nigh universal Christian opinion which could permit its subject to talk about Paul’s “repeating” that “not one—absolutely not one—of the merely outward and physical adjuncts of religion was now binding,” in face of the fact that it is Paul himself who in more than one of his Epistles draws out, at the most impressive length and in the most suggestive detail, the symbolic meanings enfolded in baptism, thus by implication most emphatically attesting the continuing obligation of the ordinance ; in face too of the fact that it is Paul himself who in a memorable passage of his first letter to the Corinthians gives particular directions about the observance of the Lord’s Supper.

“Everything was done away,” indeed ! A sweeping expression. “Was done away !” When ? How ? When Christ ordained baptism and ordained the Supper, was it then that the Supper and that baptism were “done away” ? Were these things done away in and by virtue of their being enjoined ? If not at this time, if not in this manner, then how pray, and when ? The second dispensation “did away” the first dispensation in its ritual part by in that part fulfilling it ; this is intelligible ; but the second dispensation—the dispensation to which alone baptism and the Lord’s Supper belong—has a third dispensation succeeded to this, whereby this also “now” has in its turn been “done away” ? Let the prophet of the third dispensation—if third dispensation there be, and it have a prophet among us—speak out more plainly. If “everything” now, at least, has indeed been “done away,” it concerns us all to know it.

The third dispensation, if the pseudo-Paul indicates truly its character, must be something very like, however unrecognizedly like, what Christians have learned to know, but not to admire, as “free religion.”

CHAPTER XIV

BAPTISM IN SYMBOLS

THERE are several passages of Scripture in which baptism is presented to us under certain resemblances, figures, or symbols. These divinely approved similitudes to represent baptism ought, carefully studied, to suggest useful collateral hints as to what baptism properly is, perhaps also as to who may properly receive baptism. If we know what a thing in question is like, we are at least so much nearer knowing what that thing in question itself is. Let us, accordingly, in the present chapter, give ourselves to a thoughtful examination of the symbols under which the Spirit of God has chosen to set forth baptism in his holy word.

One conspicuous scriptural passage in which baptism is expressly, and therefore unmistakably, referred to in the way of symbol or emblem, occurs in the tenth chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians. The following are the words: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

I feel that a word needs to be premised of justification for the seriousness with which I shall pres-

ently treat the strangely perverse interpretation that the advocates of sprinkling for baptism—the less enlightened, that is to say, among them—seek to put upon this passage of Scripture. I cite in illustration a comment from Arthur's "Tongue of Fire" (p. 30), curious for perfectly reckless assertion on the part of the author: "The only other case in which the mode of contact between the baptizing element and the baptized persons is indicated is this: 'And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.' They were not dipped in the cloud, but the cloud descended upon them; they were not plunged into the sea, but the sea sprinkled them as they passed." It is such popular comment as this, unaffected by scholarship either possessed or borrowed by the commentator, that still continues to blind the eyes of thousands upon thousands of conscientious non-Baptist Christians all over the world. Meantime, of course, really competent scholars of all denominations hold substantially the same doctrine concerning the passage now under consideration as that which is here about to be set forth.

In the present passage a special emphasis rests on the word *all*. Paul is enforcing the idea that no one should be over-confident of final salvation on the ground of any forms or rites observed or any privileges enjoyed. *All* the fathers, he says, shared the high experiences enumerated, but not all were brought safely through their wandering in the wilderness. For the practical purpose of rendering the historic example more impressive, Paul uses lan-

guage in a way to make the case of the ancient Israelites seem as closely parallel as possible with that of Christians. In accordance with this plan of discourse, having mentioned the abiding of the fathers under the cloud and their passing through the sea, he immediately seizes upon the thought of treating these experiences of theirs as constituting a kind of baptism. We examine now, let us keep in mind, this turn of Paul's rhetoric for the sake of finding out what is incidentally taught in it concerning a certain subordinate matter. Our question is simply this: What hint as to the true nature and form of baptism does Paul's implied comparison contain? The right way of reaching an answer will of course be by attentively considering what the comparison implied is.

I say "the comparison," but perhaps I should say "the comparisons" rather; for I am inclined to think that we have here, not one single compound comparison, in which "cloud" and "sea" are both together concerned, but two distinct comparisons instead; first, a comparison of baptism to the relation of the Israelites with the cloud, and secondly, a comparison of baptism to the relation of the Israelites with the sea; that is, I believe the quick and teeming mind of Paul saw in two different great experiences of the Israelites two different available symbols for baptism, and used them both. I draw this conclusion partly from a study of the language of the passage before us, and partly from a study of the Old Testament history. Paul does

not say, "All our fathers were under the cloud *while* they passed through the sea," nor, "All our fathers passed through the sea under the cloud"; he says, "All our fathers were under the cloud, *and* they *all* passed through the sea." The repetition of the word "all" would hardly have occurred if one and the same experience on the part of the Israelites had been intended. They all, Paul would say, had this experience, and they all had that experience. The experiences were two: first, that of being under the cloud; secondly, that of passing through the sea. With this understanding of the first verse agrees the phraseology of the second. For it is not said, "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and sea," as if sea and cloud united to give them one baptism; it is said, "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," the preposition *in* being repeated, as if to indicate two separate experiences on their part, each experience capable of being likened to baptism.

We scrutinize the history of the passing of the Red Sea, and we find our view confirmed. It is distinctly stated in Exodus that on the eve of the Israelites' commencing their dread adventure of fording the Red Sea, the cloud "went from before their face, and stood behind them." There is not the smallest hint to show that at this time the cloud was over the Israelites. The cloud *had* been before them; it now removed and took its station behind them. Whether in making this change it passed over the host or fetched a circuit to one side of them,

nothing is said that encourages us to form a conjecture. But, at all events, the cloud during the whole of the night in which the passage was effected stood in the rear of the Israelites, bright in its aspect toward them, while dark in its aspect toward the Egyptians. There is, therefore, no natural way in which the cloud could meanwhile have supplied a means of baptism to the Israelite. Elsewhere in the Old Testament history it is stated that the cloud stood *over* the Israelites and was *upon* them; the time when is not given. When, however, fixed in that local relation to the host, the cloud might in at least one conceivable way have "baptized" them. Standing behind them, it could not have done so in any way that seems natural.

We conclude, therefore, with much confidence, that Paul introduces in the verses here being considered not one symbol of baptism made up of two parts, but two different symbols instead. There was a symbolic baptism in the cloud and there was besides a symbolic baptism in the sea. Now the point is, How were these baptisms in symbol effected? Or rather, exactly what were the occurrences or experiences that Paul here uses rhetorically as analogues of baptism? Take first the symbol in which the cloud is concerned.

Two mutually contradictory answers have been proposed. One is that the cloud sprinkled water on the Israelites. To this answer there are various objections. First, there is no evidence that the cloud was an aqueous cloud. It was dark by day and

it was light at night, having in this latter case the appearance of fire. It is purely and wholly gratuitous to assume that the cloud was vapor of water. More, it is against probability. Secondly, let it have been granted that the cloud was compact of water, still it is sheer assumption—assumption again contrary to likelihood—that the cloud shed down shower upon the Israelites. Are we to suppose that the cloud kept the Israelites constantly sprinkled? That it did so upon occasions? When? Why? Thirdly, the preposition is against this view. “*In the cloud*” is the phrase. Insert “sprinkled” for “baptized” and see how the clause looks: “Were sprinkled in the cloud.” Does this seem natural? Even if the cloud had indeed shed water upon the Israelites from its position over them, still surely that fact would not have been stated in the phrase, “were sprinkled in the cloud.” Fourthly, the word “baptized” is against this view. “Baptized” means covered with, or in, or under; as for example, with, or in, or under, water. That however we must not now say. That is here a begging of the question. We do not yet know what “baptized” means; we are seeking to know. And we must not use the lexicon for the purpose; we must keep to the symbol here employed to represent baptism.

The three objections above named put sprinkling out of the question. It is not certain that the cloud sprinkled water; it is not likely that the cloud sprinkled water. It is not certain that the cloud contained water; it is not likely that the cloud con-

tained water. But if, in spite of no evidence for it and in spite of likelihood against it, the cloud did yet both contain water and sprinkle water, still that fact would not naturally be alluded to in the expression, were "baptized *in* the cloud." Nay, if sprinkling is baptism, and if the sprinkling supposed took place, then that sprinkling would not have been used as Paul here uses what did take place—namely, in the way of a symbol for baptism. A symbol is founded in, not identity, but resemblance. If a sprinkling with water *is* baptism, then a sprinkling with water is not a symbol of baptism. The whole purport of the passage is nullified if you try to make out a sprinkling with water to resemble a sprinkling with water. The Lord's Supper in the context is symbolized by the manna for the bread and by the miraculous water for wine. Here is resemblance but not identity. Just so baptism is symbolized by something that is like baptism but that is not baptism. By what, then? Why, nothing more simple. By the hovering of the cloud over the Israelites, as the water for a moment covers the subject in baptism.

But some one says, "Stay; the cloud, you hold, was not vapor of water. No water, and yet baptism?" Certainly; baptism in symbol, not baptism in fact. "The cloud simply over the Israelites, they not enveloped in it? No immersion, and yet baptism?" Certainly; the symbol may not be perfect; symbols seldom are. Still we do not know but the cloud, as the rabbis think it

did, may have wrapped the Israelites quite around in its folds. This however it is not at all necessary to suppose. The cloud covering the Israelites, according to the expression of the psalm, "He spread a cloud for a covering,"—this representation is quite sufficient for the purpose of the symbol. The feature of burial in baptism—one of the most important features of the rite as itself a symbol—is strikingly set forth. This amply suffices the purpose which the apostle had here in view.

The symbol for baptism contained in the relation of the Israelites to the cloud appears thus to exclude sprinkling as the rite intended to be alluded to. Immersion, on the contrary, for baptism entirely satisfies the conditions of the case. So much for baptism, then, as it is presented in the symbol of the cloud. A very brief notice will enable us to dismiss the symbol contained in the passing of the Red Sea.

In order to make this symbol seem consistent with a mistaken view of what baptism is, it has been assumed by some (Arthur in his "Tongue of Fire" affords an example) that the divided sea scattered spray on the Israelites as they passed through between the walls of water on either side. This assumption is purely gratuitous; there is not the slightest evidence in its favor; there is every probability against it. Is it to be supposed that God would so imperfectly work his attempted miracle? Is it like the Wonderful in working that he should indeed separate the body of the sea to make

dry land in its bed, and yet wet the Israelites, as they passed, with spray from the waves? Of course if it were related that such was the case there would be nothing for us but to believe it, and to believe it to have been wise and good; but, not being related, will anybody pretend that it is probable?

On the other hand, how like an immersion it was—like, observe, without being the same—for the Israelites to venture themselves down to the bottom of the sea and enclose themselves within those dread walls of water heaped up on either side! Conceive the event as a spectacle. The observer beholds the great procession of the Israelites descending between those beetling watery walls into a lane stretched out long and narrow across the whole breadth of the sea at the point where the passage was made. The host are lost as it were in “the midst of the sea.” After an interval they issue from their entombment in a resurrection upon the farther shore. How vividly like the majestic enactment on a colossal scale of a baptism, with its submersion, its instant of disappearance from view, its subsequent emersion, on the part of the subject! How worthily impressive an image of the beautiful ordinance by which the obedient disciple signifies his death to sin and his resurrection to righteousness, is thus seen to be that great critical act of the Israelites, in which they gave themselves irrevocably up to the leadership of Moses, passing from the bondage of Egypt through a tomb in the sea, to emerge beyond this entombment into their new life

of national freedom and power ! Is it less than irreverence—unconscious irreverence it may be—toward the word of God, to treat this passage as the upholders of sprinkling for baptism are forced to do ? Think of Paul's bringing forward an inexpressibly august and awful event of Jewish history, the crossing of the Red Sea, to make, pray, what use of it ? Why, forsooth, to separate from it an incident—namely, the sprinkling of the Israelites with spray ; an incident that if it ever occurred at all—which is in the highest degree improbable—was certainly deemed by the sacred historical writers too trivial to deserve, in their accounts of the matter, even a mention at their hands—to separate, I say, an incident so insignificant from so tremendously significant an event, making it the type of a Christian ordinance which the whole scope of the context shows Paul meant to magnify to the utmost possible impressiveness ! Is this not an anti-climax—nay, a plunge into bathos—impossible to the rhetoric of Paul ?

It ought perhaps to be noted that the “were baptized” of our common English version should, according to the best authorities, read “baptized themselves,” or “caused themselves to be baptized,” the sense thus being that the baptism was an act performed by the Israelites of their own accord. The bearing of this on the question, What persons may justly receive baptism ? is too obvious to need pointing out.

Before the final dismissal of the present passage

from consideration it may be well to remark that the finding in it of two symbols for baptism instead of one is not in the least material to the conclusion drawn as to its teaching on the form of the rite. If you please still to regard the symbolic baptism as a single one, jointly made up from the cloud and the sea, the result is the same. The baptism in that case consists in the enclosing of the Israelites in the sea while they are canopied over with the cloud. In any case, the nature of the symbol employed requires that the thing symbolized—namely, baptism—should be immersion.

The other chief passage of Scripture in which baptism is presented in symbol occurs in the third chapter of the First Epistle of Peter. This passage is confessedly difficult and obscure. The teaching of it on the present subject may, however, be made sufficiently explicit. The passage reads as follows in our English Bible: "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The best critical scholarship, independently quite of theologic or ecclesiastical bias, decides that we must translate differently from the Common version. The change required is one that does not bear either this way or that on the baptismal teachings of the text. It simply brings out the general meaning more clearly. Let us translate as follows: "Which [that is to say, *water*] in antitype, baptism, is also now saving

you (not the flesh's putting off of filth, but a good conscience's appeal to God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (The rendering of this passage in the Canterbury revision may be compared.) The meaning in paraphrase is as follows: As Noah, with his few, was saved in the ark by water, so you may regard yourselves as saved by water. The water by which you are saved is the water of baptism, of which baptismal water the water that saved Noah with his household may serve to your minds as type. Noah was borne in the ark by water (or *through* water) from the old world that perished to the new world that emerged. So you pass by the water of baptism from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Water is in both cases the medium or element of transition. But beware of mistake. Baptism, the outward act, has no power to save. Baptism does not consist in a cleansing of the physical person; its significance is not in putting away outward defilement. Indeed, it is not the flesh's act at all; it is the act of the soul; it is the regenerate "good" heart making its appeal of obedience to God. For, after all, it is only as baptism furnishes a symbol of resurrection that it can be said to save. You enact a resurrection in your baptism. The resurrection which you thus enact in baptism is doubly emblematic. It emblemizes your own resurrection from spiritual death to spiritual life; but emblemizes too that resurrection of Jesus Christ by which alone the miracle of your change has been made possible.

Thus natural and thus striking becomes the present allusion to baptism on the supposition that baptism is immersion. Suppose, on the contrary, that sprinkling is baptism, and note the change that the passage suffers in felicity and force. The water that saved Noah should, according to this latter supposition, be, not the water that buoyed and bore his ark over from the world before to the world after the flood, but the water of the falling rain, since only that feature of the great event could suggest the idea of a "sprinkling." But water conceived of as falling in the form of rain had nothing whatever to do with "saving" Noah. It was not the continued rain which went before the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep—it was the flood of water which the rain merely helped to make—that floated the ark with its living freight across, as it were, from world to world. Nothing was farther from Peter's thought as he approached this verse than the rain that preceded the deluge. His mind was full of the image of the flood with the ark buoyant on it bearing Noah and his family over (remember, he had just spoken of Christ's dying and being made again alive) from death to life. It would have been an impossible diversion for his mind to pass suddenly from this sublime conception to the comparatively trivial incident of the rainfall that preceded the flood. Yet such a diversion Peter must have made, in order to have baptism suggested to him at this moment—that is to say, it being supposed that baptism is sprinkling. Again,

how entirely needless was the warning against mistaking baptism for a physical cleansing if baptism is sprinkling! Nobody, surely, ever was in any danger of mistakenly imagining that sprinkling could make clean—except, indeed, ceremonially clean, which is entirely out of the thought and out of the language of the writer in this place. There is, on the other hand, a presumed cleansing of personal defilement naturally associated in thought with immersion of the body. This bodily cleansing, however, is nothing save as it signifies, not ceremonial cleansing, assuredly—for such a notion, I repeat, is not once present to the writer's mind, to be either approved or rejected—but cleansing of the heart. Even this spiritual cleansing, however, is not here the chief thought in Peter's mind. Not spiritual cleansing in place of physical cleansing, but simply a good conscience confidently appealing to God in an act of obedience like that of Christ at his baptism when he would "fulfill all righteousness,"—this is the purport of the parenthesis. Then follows the clause, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Christ had just before the allusion to Noah and the flood, and in the way of suggesting that, been spoken of as put to death and made alive. The idea of Christ's resurrection is therefore naturally resumed, or rather expressly mentioned again, it having been impliedly present all through the allusion to the flood. But how could the resurrection of Jesus Christ be brought into association with baptism if the baptism were sprin-

klings? What possible relation of resemblance can be conceived to lie between a sprinkling and resurrection? On the other hand, between a resurrection and the emersion that of necessity succeeds and completes the act of momentary immersion, the resemblance is too striking to escape any observer's attention.

Thus much for the teaching of this allusion to baptism in so far as respects the form and nature of the rite. But the allusion speaks of baptism as a good conscience's appeal to God, or perhaps rather as the appeal to God for a good conscience. Neither the one nor the other of these two things, and no "appeal" of any sort on the subjects' part, could baptism be, if unconscious infants were baptized; which consideration decisively settles it that baptism as proper for unconscious infants was an idea quite absent from the mind of the writer. Carefully and candidly study it, and how unexpectedly, how surprisingly, self-vindicating proves to be the inspired word of God! In so many different ways does the truth, once fairly apprehended, preclude and exclude error. The scriptural symbols *for* baptism, scarcely less than the scriptural symbols *in* baptism, testify that baptism is, and can be, nothing but immersion. "Symbols in Baptism" will form the title of a succeeding chapter complementary to the present discussion. Under that title another text of Scripture will be treated, whose two-fold character is such that it might with equal propriety be treated here; for the text to which I refer gives

us at once baptism in a symbol and a symbol in baptism. This text occurs in the third chapter of John's Gospel. The essential words in it are these: "Born of water." In these words baptism is mentioned under the figure of a birth—a birth from, or out of, water. Such a figure for baptism contains an irresistible implication. Nothing but immersion satisfies the conditions of the case. In immersion those conditions are completely satisfied. The person of one baptized issues from the water in the act of immersion, like the breaking forth of a child at its birth. The baptized is justly and vividly described as "born of water." The figure fits exactly; but it fits exactly to the rite of immersion, and to no other.

The argument created by all these various coincidences of figure would alone suffice, if every other argument were wanting, to establish beyond reasonable doubt the truth that baptism is immersion, and that nothing except immersion is baptism.

CHAPTER XV

SYMBOLS IN BAPTISM

IT may be remarked at the outset that the purpose with which this study is undertaken does not require us to regard the truly remarkable resemblances set forth by the New Testament writers as discoverable in baptism, in the light of symbols originally and designedly lodged in the rite by him who ordained it. Such I, for my part, do indeed believe these resemblances to have been. Still, for the object of our present quest it will answer equally well to treat the passages considered as mere rhetorical turns suggested by essential features of the rite which were perfectly familiar to those for whom the New Testament was primarily written, and which therefore were, of course, never questioned by them. Whether the analogies drawn out in Scripture between baptism and certain Christian facts and doctrines were foreordained by God to exist, in order to constitute that rite a kind of unchangeable object lesson in religion, or whether these analogies were discovered as an afterthought by the wit of man under divine inspiration—this, with respect to our immediate strictly limited purpose, is entirely immaterial. In either case equally the analogies, whether designed or fortu-

itous, on two points at least speak an unambiguous language. Those two points are these: First, What, according to Scripture, is baptism? and, secondly, Who, according to Scripture, may be baptized?

Let us begin with the most extended and most important of the passages in which symbolic meanings are drawn forth out of baptism. This passage is found in the sixth chapter of Romans:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

The first of these verses implies very plainly that all those with whom Paul identifies himself by saying “we,” that is, all Christians—not simply all Roman Christians, for Paul was in no way identified with these more than with Christians generally—in virtue of being Christians, had been, or were supposed to have been, as a matter of course, baptized, and that the baptism thus universally experienced had a particular significance, the same in all the cases alike, connected with Christ’s death. What this significance is, the context sufficiently shows. Paul had just said with characteristic energy of expression that Christians could not be habitual sinners, for the reason that as to sin they had died. The act of dying, not the state of being dead, is the true idea. Or do you not know, he

asks, the meaning of your baptism? When you were baptized in sign of entering into discipleship to Christ you were baptized in sign of having died as Christ died. Such is the very symbolism of the rite. This is why you were buried in being baptized. Dead men only are buried; your burial in baptism meant therefore that you had previously died. Of course the death thus spoken of by Paul as experienced by the Christian, is a figurative death. It means the absolute breaking of all relation with sin, a rupture final and complete, like that rupture which death produces. This, let it be observed, is said to be the significance of baptism. Whatever, therefore, the nature and form of the rite (that question may rest for the moment), the significance of the rite is, that the subject of it has already died—not, be it noted, that he will die subsequently, not that he dies in the very act and article of the baptism, but that he has already died. This is said to be the case with all that have been baptized into Christ: they all died to sin before being baptized. In baptism they were “buried”—as persons already dead—that is, as persons who had distinctly dissolved all relation with sin. Is this the fact with unconscious infants? Can it be? Is it, can it be, the fact with any except truly regenerate souls?

The view may be taken that the act of dying to sin is meant to be represented by Paul as accomplished in the act of being baptized. “Being buried” is then only another way of setting forth

the "dying." But of course if "being baptized" is equivalent to "dying" and "being buried"—the physical fact to the spiritual fact—it must be so, not literally, but in the way of figure; that is to say, the subject of the baptism enacts in that baptism a physical symbol of a spiritual experience. He says in language of sign to the eye, "As thus I go, like one dying, into a grave of water, so I die to sin." We may repeat our questions, Is this experience the fact with unconscious infants? Can it be? Is it, can it be, the fact with any except truly regenerate souls?

So much for the implication of this passage as to the proper subjects for baptism. Has the passage any implication as to the nature and form of the rite? Let us inquire.

Suppose the form of the rite had been sprinkling. Will anybody say that Paul's language would, on this supposition, have been naturally suggested? The spiritual facts to be signified would still have been the same. But would the figure of rhetoric under which Paul exhibits the facts have been equally appropriate and natural? Let us try a substitution and see. We replace "baptize" and "baptism" by "sprinkle" and "sprinkling," and read the passage thus, and not otherwise, changed. We have: "Know ye not that so many of us as were sprinkled into Jesus Christ were sprinkled into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by the sprinkling into his death." Now of course a just allowance is to be made for the discomposing

effect of any important verbal change in so familiar a passage of Scripture. But, making such allowance, still do we not feel that there is some incurable want of congruity between the idea of sprinkling and the idea of burial as symbolized thereby? Make the alternative substitution of "immersion" instead of "sprinkling," and you have the same allowance as before to make for a verbal change in a familiar passage; but is not the resultant final effect far less strange, far less, so to speak, grotesque and ridiculous? Here is the new rendering in the words of a reputable printed version: "How shall we, who died to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that all we who were immersed into Jesus Christ were immersed into his death? We were buried therefore with him by the immersion into his death." Now answer fairly, is not this more in keeping with itself than was the alternative form with "sprinkling" substituted for "baptism"? Is there any consonance between "sprinkling" and a burial? and is not the consonance striking between a burial and "immersion"? Suppose it were your task to devise a rite that should be symbolic at once of burial and of resurrection, what livelier resemblance could you wish than that contained in immersion? What resemblance could be more purely conventional and awkward than that which sprinkling would supply? And since baptism is unquestionably here used in such connection with the idea of burial and resurrection as to suggest a resemblance between it and them—in

such connection, moreover, as to make it almost certain that it was the perceived resemblance which dictated the form of expression for the writer's thought—since this is the case, can there be any reasonable doubt that baptism *is* immersion and nothing else?

To be connected with the passage in Romans just considered is a parallel passage in the second chapter of Colossians:

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Burial and resurrection, the implications present here, are symbolized in baptism. Surely this could not be the case if baptism were sprinkling. The likeness is most obvious and beautiful in the rite of immersion. Remember, I am not now insisting that immersion was chosen for the sake of the symbolism in it of burial and resurrection, to be the great rite of the Christian religion that it is. It suffices for my present purpose to point out merely that this symbolism found in it, whether put there of original intention or not, determines the rite of baptism to be immersion and nothing else. Still, I am willing to commit myself and say that the tone of the allusions in Paul to baptism as figurative of burial and resurrection is just what the tone of such allusions would naturally be if it were a part of the apostle's customary inculcation thus to unfold the meaning of the ordinance. The allusions have less the air of incidental literary illustration than of regular and

recognized Christian instruction. We get a truer and livelier sense of the foregoing passage if therein, as well as in the first verse of the third chapter, where the interrupted representation is resumed, we translate "were raised" instead of "are risen." This change, required by the Greek, makes more clear and unmistakable the reference intended by the apostle to the particular point of time when the baptism occurred. It is as if we should read: "If then ye were, on occasion of your baptism, raised together with Christ." The two-fold symbol of resurrection—resurrection as a literal fact in the history of Jesus, resurrection as a spiritual fact in the experience of the Christian—found in baptism as treated by Scripture can be satisfied only on the supposition that baptism is immersion; while on that supposition it is completely and easily satisfied. The inference is irresistible that immersion, and nothing but immersion, is baptism.

We take up now a group of passages in which a different symbol from that of resurrection—namely, the symbol of birth, a second birth—seems to be brought to light in Scripture as discoverable in baptism. "Seems," I say; for here I confess we enter upon ground where I tread with less confident steps. The scriptures to be treated in this immediate part of our discussion are obscure and difficult, and I shall not dogmatize. I content myself with indicating what, after considerable study, appears to me to be upon the whole the most satisfactory among the various possible interpretations.

The first of the passages that may fairly be understood to suggest a symbolism for regeneration as contained in baptism, occurs in the third chapter of John's Gospel. Our Saviour is there reported as saying to Nicodemus :

“Except a man be born of water and [of the] Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

The words “of the ” embraced in brackets have no equivalent in the Greek and may therefore be omitted. The omission of these words leaves us free, if it does not even oblige us, to understand that one birth only, doubly characterized as birth of water and Spirit, is spoken of here ; not two births, one of water and one of Spirit. Whatever, then, birth of water may mean, it means what it means in inseparable unity with birth of the Spirit. But what does birth of water mean ? Let us consider.

When the conversation with Nicodemus occurred, the most striking thing in the then current history of the Jewish nation, next to the ministry of Jesus, and at the actual moment perhaps hardly second to that, was the baptism of John. When Jesus first responded to Nicodemus, his expression was, “Ye must be born again.” This was designed, no doubt, to be a stimulating paradox. Nicodemus received it as such and set his wits to work to divine its meaning. Very likely his thoughts went to John's baptism. “Does Jesus mean that ? ” he asked himself. Not satisfied he seeks the Lord's own explanation. The Lord perceived the guess that Nicodemus had made and answered accordingly :

“Baptism, yes ; but more than baptism—baptism *and* what baptism implies. I said you must be born again, and you are conjecturing that I may mean baptism ; and so indeed I do, but only in its symbolic relation to something else. Except a man be born of water *and* Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” At any rate it is perfectly evident that birth of Spirit is the idea that receives all the emphasis in the Saviour’s thought ; that idea he dwells upon and illustrates. The idea of birth from water he mentions merely to dismiss ; he uses it as a stepping-stone of transition and returns to his first real thought, namely, the need of a new birth. This use he makes of it only because the idea of baptism was already in the mind of Nicodemus ; which fact, and not any priority of baptism to regeneration, caused baptism to be spoken of first.

All this, of course, assumes that “born of water” alludes to baptism. That it does, is the nearly unanimous opinion of commentators. It is clear from the context, as well as from the general tenor of Scripture, that baptism thus alluded to in the phrase “born of water” bears in Christ’s thought some quite subordinate relation to regeneration. The most natural relation to suppose is the relation of symbol. Baptism represents regeneration by resemblance of some sort. What is the resemblance ? The very phrase “born of water,” to imply baptism, answers the question. If baptism can properly be spoken of as a birth from water, the reason why is obvious. Baptism *is* a sort of

birth from water ; the subject in baptism issues from the water as the child at birth issues from the womb. Hence, to "be born of water" is a not unnatural figure of speech for to "be baptized." It is, however, a figure of speech not likely to have been employed on this occasion by Christ, as also was baptism itself not likely to have been mentioned at all, except for the idea which, adopting the suggestion of another, I have ventured to suppose was awakened in the mind of Nicodemus by his attempt to solve the paradox, "Ye must be born again." I freely acknowledge that what I propose is not demonstrative, but only probable exegesis. I do not build any vital argument upon it. That "born of water" should, as is generally held, refer to baptism, supplies an argument for immersion as baptism that does not in the least require to be supplemented by our considering that baptism further is symbolic of regeneration.

On the supposition that the well-nigh universally received interpretation is right, we have a mention here made by our Saviour of baptism in terms of symbol, that is, mention of it as a birth of, or out of, water. To what notion of baptism does such language fit and conform but to the notion of baptism as immersion ? What likeness is there between birth and, for instance, a sprinkling ? But between birth and the emersion following and completing an immersion the likeness is obvious and striking. That baptism should be referred to as a birth of, or out of, or from, water fixes the nature of baptism

beyond reasonable question. But if our present interpretation of the whole passage is sound, we have here something more than the mere mentioning of baptism in such terms of symbol as settle the form of the rite. We have also such a connection of birth from water with birth from the Spirit as makes baptism, symbolized by birth, itself symbolic of birth. This text, therefore, does two mutually complementary things: it first presents baptism in a symbol, the symbol of natural birth, and then it presents also a symbol in baptism, the symbol of spiritual birth. In whichever way you choose to regard it, baptism as thus presented, symbolized or symbolizing, refuses still to be anything but immersion.

There is, however, another text in which the same symbolism, that of spiritual new birth, appears to be drawn out from the rite of baptism. This other text occurs in the third chapter of Titus: "He saved us by the washing of regeneration." "The washing of regeneration" is a mistranslation. It should read, "the *laver*, or *font*, of regeneration." The word mistranslated "washing" means, not the act or fact of bathing, but a vessel designed to hold water for a full bath. Paul here, then, alludes to baptism as a bath; a "bath of regeneration" he calls it, that is, not a bath producing regeneration, but a bath accompanying regeneration and signifying that. What is regeneration? Simply second birth, being born again. How is regeneration connected in thought with a bath, so as to give rise to the expression "bath of regeneration"? Why, the bath

symbolizes the regeneration. How? By being a bath, or an immersion, out of which the subject issues, like a child from the womb, symbolically regenerated, figuratively born into a new life. The symbolism of regeneration thus found, if legitimately found, in baptism, makes it necessary that the baptism in which it is found should be immersion. Sprinkling would by no means furnish such a symbolism.

We have in the third chapter of Galatians this language: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." More exactly, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ"—the two things, namely, the being baptized and the putting on of Christ, being considered as coincident in time. The word used for "putting on" is the word ordinarily and distinctively employed to denote the putting on of raiment. Such is, no doubt, the figure intended to be here introduced. The Christian, then, was represented by Paul as clothing himself with Christ. This is one of the ways in which the great idea of the Christian's union and identification with Christ is set forth. The person of a man is wrapped around by, is contained, in the garments that he wears—he is in them. So the believer is "*in* Christ"; he has put on Christ and Christ now clothes him. The figure of being clothed with Christ thus presents the idea of being in Christ. But now why is baptism spoken of in connection? There was a reason for it. What is the reason? The relation affirmed or implied is,

that in the act of being baptized the act of putting on Christ was performed.

Now, of course, no one that we need now consider supposes that this was literally the case—in other words, that literally being baptized unites the subject with Christ. In what sense, then, was it the case? How was baptism the act of putting on Christ? Why, figuratively, representatively, symbolically. The act of being baptized *represented* the act of putting on Christ. The rite had that significance; its symbolism was such. Baptism, then, contains a symbol of union with Christ. How? If sprinkling is baptism, no answer is possible. It is easy to answer if baptism is immersion. Nothing could more strikingly typify the spiritual fact of the believer's entering into Christ so as thenceforth to be, according to Paul's favorite phrase, occurring in the immediate context, "*in* Christ," nothing, I say, could more strikingly typify this spiritual fact than the physical fact of immersion in water. For a moment the water envelops the person of the subject like a flowing garment. The subject has put that robe of water on; he is in it. His ritual act speaks this language: "Thus I put on Christ. He clothes me thus. I am in him now, as I am in this water." Now, certainly the Galatian Christians had all, in being baptized, performed some act that Paul could use as a figure for putting on Christ. What was the act? Was it being sprinkled? Was it *not* being immersed? And does not the use by Paul of baptism as a symbol for the believer's putting on of Christ, in

the sense of his becoming one with, of his entering into Christ, imply immersion, to the exclusion of sprinkling, for baptism ?

The symbolic reference in baptism to the idea of the believer's mystical union with Christ, is probably the true explanation of the expression "baptized into Christ," wherever in Scripture this expression occurs. The Great Commission says, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Our English Bible renders "*in* the name of," but this is manifestly an inadequate and even a misleading translation. Elsewhere we have "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." In still other places the word "name" is omitted, and the expression is shortened to "baptized into Christ." The preposition is in all these cases the same, "into." The word "name" is, in such a use, a Hebraism for the personality of the being named. We get the real force of the expression when we omit the word "name" altogether, and read, for example in the Great Commission, "Baptizing them into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost." The sense is, "Signifying by baptism the entrance of the subject into a mystical union of life with God in his three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit." The word "name" is, in fact, as I have said, sometimes omitted in Scripture language, and the expression reduced to "baptized into Christ." We have just been examining an instance in which this shortened expression occurs in very significant connection with

an unmistakable reference to the great idea of union and identification with Christ, namely, the text, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ." That text interprets for us the expression, "being baptized into Christ," making it mean "entering into Christ," "becoming one with him." In one word, baptism *symbolizes* the spiritual union of the believer with Christ. Are we not warranted, then, in reverting from this implied interpretation to the use of language in the Great Commission, and in understanding that solemn command to make baptism, not simply an arbitrary ritual act without special significance of its own, but a symbol of the disciple's union with God, of his passing *into*, and so remaining *in*, God—of his partaking of the divine nature? How shocking that we should confuse the symbol of a fact so sublime and maim it to speak in a dialect of Babel, by substituting for baptism something entirely different, something breathing not a hint of a mystery that is at once too high and too hard not to need every possible expedient for keeping it signified and vivid to our minds and our hearts—the mystery of the union of the human with the Divine!

But union of Christ's disciples, taken individually, with Christ, is not the only union of which baptism is the symbol. In the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians we find the expression, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." "Ye," Paul soon afterward says, speaking as to Christians taken collectively, "ye are the body of Christ." It fol-

lows, then, that this pregnant and manifold symbol, Christian baptism, signifies as well the mutual union of believers with each other as their common union with their Lord. That such a meaning was taught by Paul to lie enfolded in baptism, helps to explain a famous passage in Ephesians. I refer to the passage in which occur the words, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The main idea of this passage was to assemble, in one eloquent appeal, all the watchwords of mutual unity among themselves that might help to make the Ephesian Christians dwell at peace with one another. Now, the fact of baptism's being taught by Paul to *symbolize* the believer's incorporation into one body with his brethren, makes it clear why baptism, being thus significant to apostolic converts, should be invoked here as a rallying cry for union and peace. Conceive the effect of such a reminder to disciples instructed to know that when they yielded themselves to baptism, their entrance into the watery flood *meant* that thus they entered into one universal brotherhood of redeemed souls making up together the mystical body of Christ! How utterly without any such force of eloquent symbol and reminder would be an arbitrary rite of sprinkling! The suggestion springing from *resemblance* would be wanting. It is thus seen that in order to *symbolize* union of Christians among themselves, as baptism is used by Paul to do, it is necessary that baptism should be an immersion of the whole person of the subject in water, a kind of incorporation of the man with the element.

In addition to the symbolic meanings already unfolded, there is likewise presented in Scripture the symbol of spiritual purification as belonging to baptism. There are several texts that make this symbolism of the rite sufficiently clear. In the Acts it is related by Paul that Ananias addressed him in these words: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Here baptism is indisputably made to symbolize a spiritual cleansing on the part of the subject. In the fifth chapter of Ephesians we have this: "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Paul here speaks of the church as bride to Christ; his aim in doing so is to bring forward the highest conceivable sanction for the injunction he is laying upon husbands to love their wives. It is natural, therefore, for him to go on in a kind of parallel drawn between the husband's relation to his wife and Christ's relation to his church. As the bridegroom in espousing the bride gives presents and dowry, so Christ does—he gives himself for his church. As the Oriental bride before her nuptials takes a special bath in preparation, so Christ arranged it that the church, his spouse, should be cleansed for union with himself by means of a laver, or bathing-font, in which the word of truth should work the purifying effect. The term "water," ("of water") seems to be introduced to point more clearly the allusion to baptism. Baptism is thus constituted a correspondence to the ante-nuptial bath taken by

the Eastern bride. The "word," the *spoken* word (such is the sense of the Greek original)—that is, the gospel preached—is really the purifying element, in accordance with what Christ prays: "Sanctify them through [in] thy truth; thy word is truth." The water of baptism (baptism considered as a symbol of spiritual cleansing) is the copula that joins the two ideas—namely, that of the bride's formal purification and that of the sanctification of the church—in such a relation of apparent resemblance as was needful to be established, in order to serve the purposes of Paul's rhetoric at this point. The full bath of the bride preceding her nuptials, and the baptism of the church individual by individual in the purifying element of the spoken word on the entrance of each into mystical marriage with the Lord—such seems to be the comparison intended by Paul. The express mention of "water," however, makes it evident that the literal baptism, or immersion, of the convert in water, as invariably the condition of discipleship, was what suggested the parallel to Paul's mind. Manifestly, the parallel could have been suggested only on the supposition that the convert's baptism was a bath or immersion, like the full bath of the bride.

Clearer, however, and for our immediate object fullest, of all allusions in Scripture to the symbol of purification in baptism is perhaps the passage in Hebrews: "Let us draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with

pure water.” (A perhaps better punctuation connects the last clause with what follows instead of with what precedes, thus: “Let us draw near, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and, having our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our faith.” This change of connection is in no way material to the use now about to be made of the passage. It is a point of interest, and I merely mention it in passing.) The imagery and rhetoric of all this strain of exhortation are derived from the ceremonial of the old dispensation—a ceremonial elaborately prefigurative of the realities of the new. The two conditions affecting the believer are here named: one is, that the heart have been sprinkled from an evil conscience; the other, that the body have been washed with pure water. Both conditions are stated in a form suggested by the ritual of the Mosaic economy. There was a sprinkling and there was a washing of the body required by the Levitical law. The sprinkling was with blood mingled and prepared in a certain manner rigorously prescribed. The washing of the body was with clean water in the way of full immersion. The washing followed the sprinkling. The explanation is carefully, painstakingly, repetitiously made in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the sprinkling referred to as a feature of the present dispensation is a sprinkling with the blood of Jesus. It is, I believe, demonstrable—has, I believe, been demonstrated—that sprinkling as a usage of the Bible, whether of the Old Testa-

ment or the New, is *never* a sprinkling with water, mere and pure water. But, however this may be, the sprinkling *here* referred to is a sprinkling with the blood of Jesus. In a previous chapter the writer of the Epistle has said: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" In a chapter following, this language occurs: "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The sprinkling meant in the text on which we are dwelling is accordingly a sprinkling with blood, the blood of Jesus. It is of course then not a literal, but a figurative, sprinkling. Christ's blood is not literally sprinkled; it could not be literally sprinkled on living human "hearts." Christ's blood, as a figure of Christ's offering of himself unto death on our behalf, does however produce, on souls that believe, a cleansing effect answering to the effect produced by the typical blood of sacrificial victims sprinkled to make the objects, persons, or things affected by it ceremonially clean. The work of cleansing signified here is an inward work; it is justification, forgiveness. But the believer, besides being thus figuratively "sprinkled," as to his heart, with the blood of Jesus, is also "washed," as to his body, with pure water. The words "body" and "water"

determine the washing to be a literal one ; it is baptism. The full sense accordingly in paraphrase is this : " Let us draw near to God, having been made fit to do so by the gracious justifying act of our Heavenly Father, for Christ's sake, forgiving and abolishing our sins. And, having fulfilled all righteousness by submitting our bodies to be washed with pure water—that is, by being baptized—let us keep faithful to the profession that we have thus solemnly made."

Here, then, in a crucial passage of Scripture—a passage that might almost seem to have been providently introduced by the Spirit of God on purpose to forestall and preclude the very mistake that, notwithstanding, so many Christian people do strangely make—here, then, I say, we have sprinkling and immersion both unmistakably mentioned : sprinkling in such a way mentioned as to render it certain that sprinkling cannot be baptism ; immersion in such a way mentioned as to render it certain that baptism must be immersion.

In conclusion, we may say that there is no symbolic import of baptism suggested in Scripture which does not require in order to satisfy it that baptism should be immersion. Baptism symbolizes the Saviour's death and his resurrection ; it symbolizes the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to righteousness ; it apparently symbolizes the mystery of the new birth, or regeneration ; it symbolizes the fact of the believer's union and identification with Christ ; it symbolizes the fact of the believer's incor-

poration into one body with his brethren ; it symbolizes the idea of the believer's purification from sin. In all these symbolic relations of baptism, sprinkling fails to be a symbol and so fails to be baptism ; while, in the same relations, immersion as a symbol is its own sufficient vindication.

Is it well, is it obedient, to wreck all this precious preaching and teaching power of an ordinance of the Lord—upon what ? Upon a caprice, an assumption, a tradition of men.

CHAPTER XVI

BIBLICAL "BELITTLING" OF BAPTISM

ONE of the most pronouncedly anti-Baptist of the non-Baptist religious journals of this country some time ago in discussing baptism, used the word "belittled" in a manner to challenge attention. It said that "Christ and his disciples have in no other case [than that of baptism] shown the least interest in ritualistic questions, but have consistently belittled them." It seemed thence to infer that baptism too, as a "ritualistic question," is authoritatively "belittled." In view of such teaching addressed to a numerous public from an intelligent source, it has occurred to me that a fair exhibition of the facts as to the point involved might be useful. The real place that baptism occupies in the inculcations of the New Testament is a thing not always adequately understood by Baptists, and by Pedobaptists in general it is, as I believe, very strikingly misunderstood.

"Suppose that you Baptists are right in your views as to what baptism properly is, and as to what persons may properly be baptized; still, are you not making the whole subject far more *important* than Scripture makes it?" Some such question as this would, no doubt, pretty fairly represent the attitude

of mind toward the discussion of the subject of baptism which a very large number—perhaps the great majority—of Christian people more or less consciously assume. And it is a very natural attitude of mind—very natural, that is to say, for those who have not as yet given the matter much serious attention.

And yet, to postpone for a moment our purposed appeal to Scripture, might it not seem that the manifest, the undeniable, *practical* relation which all Christendom maintains to the rite, should estop any individual Christian from disparaging the importance of baptism? For what do we observe? We observe all Christendom, the Christendom of to-day, with exceptions comparatively so insignificant that they may without impropriety be disregarded, faithfully, punctiliously practising a rite which goes by the name of baptism. We turn our eyes backward over nineteen centuries of Christian history in the past, and we observe that this has always, without interruption, been the case. Assuredly, the history of the Christian church, the universal present practice of the Christian church, pronounce in favor of the importance of baptism a judgment that it would be presumption on the part of any individual to ignore or to despise.

But of course a judgment like this—though, by right of immemorial prescription, of universal assent, it deserves our sincere respect, and even our presumptive concurrence—is nevertheless not necessarily a final and conclusive disposition of the matter.

The Bible itself, and the Bible alone, is the court of ultimate appeal. If the Bible reverses the sentence of precedent and example, why, precedent and example, no matter how reverend and imposing, must submit in silence. If, on the other hand, the Bible sustains the verdict of history and usage, what then is there to be said against the voice of such judges speaking in unison? Reason certainly can say nothing except to advise accepting their sentence without demur. To the Bible, then; let us go to see what the Bible may teach as to the *importance* of baptism.

In the first place, Jesus himself was baptized. *He* did not consider baptism too unimportant to receive his attention. It is not the least matter now whether the baptism which Jesus received at the hands of John the Baptist is to be regarded as the same with the baptism which Jesus himself afterward appointed. At all events, the baptism which Jesus appointed is not *less* important than that which John the Baptist administered; and the baptism which John the Baptist administered was important enough for Jesus to make a considerable journey to receive it. The baptism which Christ appointed is thus seen to be important from the fact that a less important baptism was sanctioned by Christ's example of obedience to it.

In the second place, Jesus himself baptized. Now, whether Jesus baptized with his own hands or by the hands of his disciples does not signify. He baptized: this is distinctly related in the Gospels. In

one case, to be sure, it is also said in connection that Jesus did not himself baptize, but baptized by his disciples. This explanation, however, only makes the fact that Jesus baptized more striking. For some reason—what reason we need not conjecture—Jesus at one period of his ministry chose not to baptize with his own hands; at the same time, he baptized. Whatever the reason may have been for Christ's not baptizing with his own hands, that reason did not hold for his not baptizing. Baptism was so important that, though he did not administer it himself, Christ still would administer it by his disciples. In addition, accordingly, to the argument for the importance of baptism drawn from Christ's example in being baptized, we have the argument drawn from Christ's example in baptizing.

This however is not the whole, nor does it even constitute the greatest part, of the argument that Christ himself, in his own personal act, furnishes for the importance of baptism. Besides submitting to baptism, and besides practising baptism, Christ distinctly and expressly enjoins baptism. We might of course inexpugnably infer that Christ enjoined baptism from the fact that under Christ's own personal and immediate superintendence and authority Christ's disciples baptized. But we are not left to inference, even where inference is so irresistible as this. Christ's command to baptize survives in express language. Nor does this statement fairly present the case as it is. It was not only in express and unmistakable terms that Christ

commanded baptism, but it was under circumstances peculiarly solemn and impressive. He commanded baptism in what would seem to be the very last words that he ever spoke on earth with human lips before his final ascension to the skies. The directions which on that occasion he left with his disciples were few, they were momentous, and they comprised a direction to baptize. Those directions were comprehensive of the sum total of Christian duty, and they accordingly descended to no particulars, with one remarkable exception : that exception was baptism. What do I gather from this ? That baptism is of all things in the Christian religion the thing most important ? By no means. There are plenty of reasons furnished in Scripture for not taking this view of baptism—of baptism, that is to say, in itself. That baptism therefore—being, as is abundantly demonstrable from Scripture, not *in itself* of such commanding comparative importance—should yet be mentioned in that brief summary of duty which we call the Great Commission, shows that baptism must draw a significance entitling it to its place in that august statute of the kingdom of heaven from some relation that the rite holds to another idea. What is that idea, and what is that relation ? That idea is the idea of return, on the part of the subject, from rebellion against God, of present entire self-consecration to God, of a real though inscrutable identification with God. Such is the idea ; and the relation of baptism to this idea is that baptism

means the idea. Hence the language of the command: "Discipling all nations, baptizing them into the [name of the] Father and [of] the Son and [of] the Holy Ghost." (Certain words foregoing are bracketed to indicate that the sense remains the same—it perhaps even becomes clearer to our Western minds—when they are omitted. Their presence in the text may probably best be regarded as in the nature of a transferred Hebrew idiom.) Baptism was, and it was to be, the inseparable sign or symbol of this great idea of return to God and incorporation in him. Thus it is to be accounted for that baptizing should be commanded in the Great Commission—not for its own sake, but for the sake of what it signified. So inseparable was the sign from the thing signified that the thing signified was at once suggested when its sign was named. Is not baptism important? If in Christ's thought the sign was thus nearly one with the thing signified, can we afford to separate the two? Do we not hear a solemn voice saying, What God hath joined together let not man put asunder? But we do put asunder things that God has joined, if we either neglect baptism altogether, or put baptism in the wrong place, or put a wrong thing in the place of baptism. Three things then, in Christ's own personal act show the importance of baptism: *First*, Christ's example in being baptized; *secondly*, his example in baptizing; and *thirdly*, his enjoining of baptism.

Thus much might well suffice for establishing the

importance of baptism from Scripture. But Scripture testimony on this point is far from being exhausted. On the great first occasion of preaching that occurred under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit followed and confirmed the teaching of Christ as to the importance of baptism; for Peter, speaking for the rest of the apostles as well as for himself, and speaking under stress of that awful inspiration which then first descended in power from heaven upon men, told the convinced and convicted, now become obedient, among his hearers, "Repent *and* be baptized, every one of you." That the duty of baptism was not for that single occasion only, nor only for Jews, would need no proof. But proof is at hand; for we read that on a subsequent occasion Peter, having been taught by a vision from heaven that the Gentiles too were to be sharers with the Jews of the blessings of the gospel, asked aloud, "Can any man forbid water that these [certain Gentiles, that is to say] should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Peter then "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Here at least, Peter apparently, like his Lord during one period of the Lord's ministry, did not baptize with his own hands. But baptism at somebody's hands was a matter of course. Still it was not left to be simply a matter of course; it was expressly commanded. So important does baptism appear to have been in the inspired view of Peter. That Peter was not in this respect peculiar among

the original apostles is evident from the distinct statement that in enjoining baptism he stands forth "with the eleven," manifestly their accepted spokesman, replying on their behalf as well as on his own to questions that were addressed to himself simply in common with them.

The apostle to the Gentiles takes the same view of baptism with those who preceded him in the apostolate. We have his example of personal obedience to the ordinance. We know that he baptized, that he baptized a few at least with his own hands. This Paul says himself ; and the connection in which he says it shows beyond the shadow of doubt that under his preaching the baptism of converts was a quite invariable practice. Paul indeed tells us that he was like Jesus and like Peter in not generally baptizing with his own hands. This, however, simply serves to teach us that who baptized was not important. It is a wholly false inference from what Paul says on this point, the inference that he did not attach importance to baptism itself. Quite the contrary indeed is implied. Paul was sent, he said, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel ; true, but the gospel that Paul preached is seen from Paul's own language to have been a gospel of obedience to Christ that included baptism as the invariable accompaniment of discipleship.

But Paul testified to the importance of baptism in the Christian system in other ways than by being himself baptized, by himself baptizing, and by uniformly having his converts baptized: he

made baptism the means of repeated and varied and most impressive doctrinal and practical inculcation. He did this in such a way that the inculcation depends for its force upon the invariable fact presupposed of baptism as having occurred in the case of every convert. The inculcation depended further for its force upon the form and nature of the rite. That point however having been argued in preceding pages, I do not insist upon it here. Let it here suffice to say that these inculcations of Paul draw their force at least from the presumed fact that baptism had occurred in the case of every convert. Would Paul have staked important teaching upon a circumstance not deemed by him important? Or if he would, and if he did, then is not that otherwise unimportant circumstance thereby made important? Peter too alludes to baptism in the way of illustration, the terms of allusion being such as to imply that baptism occupied a conspicuous place in the teaching and practice of the apostolic churches.

Thus important in the estimate put upon it in Scripture, does baptism appear to be. Remember that this view of baptism as important is entirely irrespective of the question what baptism is. No matter now as to that. Baptism is something, it is anything, it is a thing unknown; but whatever it may be, it is important. That point is settled beyond dispute. Now is it unimportant to determine if we can *what* a thing thus important really is? Is it enough merely to admit that baptism is indeed so

important as by all means to require from us something that we shall call baptizing? Or does common sense, does reason, does the spirit of obedience require that in a matter so important we try to find out exactly what Christ wants to have us do, and then that we scrupulously do just that and nothing else? Do we escape ritualism by painstakingly performing *a* rite if only we do not mind at all to perform *the* rite? Do we not rather with great accuracy fall plumb into the very pit that we think to avoid? What is it but ritualism, the very essence of ritualism, ritualism mere and pure, ritualism with no salt of other element accompanying to save it—what else, I say, than ritualism thus purified seven times is it to insist at all hazards on doing *some thing*, something outward, while we lift up our hands and protest that we do not care a penny whether what we do is what was commanded; we only feel that *a* rite must be performed? Yet precisely such, strictly ascertained, is the real meaning of the attitude toward baptism held by large numbers of Christians who honestly, and even indignantly, suppose themselves to be fighting against ritualism in opposing Baptist views.

The difference between Pedobaptists and Baptists at this point is to a great extent the difference between ritualism and obedience. Those who observe *a* rite, not concerning themselves to observe *the* rite, ritualize; those who observe *the* rite because that rite is commanded, obey. Pedobaptists perform *a* rite; Baptists obey *the* ordinance. Baptists simply

apply to baptism their constitutive principle of obedience.

Well is it if with equal fidelity they apply the same principle to other things of not less importance !

CHAPTER XVII

A TALK WITH CHRISTIANS NOT BAPTISTS

OBEYING is what Christ wants of us. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" is his half-severe, half-pathetic way of insistence. But we are very apt to think that obeying is no highly important matter, provided only we have a good excuse for not obeying; at least we seem to act as if we thought this. Accordingly what lavish use of ingenuity in providing ourselves with excuses for not doing just the thing that Christ commands! I have sometimes thought that if we spent as much mental force in seeking to obey as we do in seeking reasons why we need not obey, it would double at once the volume of our obedience. And what necessary thing is there left out of that formula for life to the Christian which should consist in enjoining the increase of obedience to Christ?

I am far from narrowing this principle to its application to the ordinance of baptism; but to that ordinance the application of the principle is singularly apt. Christ says, "Be baptized"; and strange to consider, the great mass of Christians, instead of obeying this simple command, deliver themselves up to finding reasons why the command

is not to be obeyed. I purpose here to examine a few of the reasons most commonly advanced for this incredible neglect of obedience.

One says, "Why, I have been baptized. Christ does not require me to be baptized more than once, does he?" *Your* reason for not obeying, then, is that you are not commanded. That fact is certainly an excellent reason, if indeed the fact exists. But are you sure that the fact exists? Are you sure that you are not commanded? What makes you think you are not? "Because I have already been baptized." When did your baptism occur? "When I was an infant." Were you conscious of it at the time? "Of course I was not." You took no active part in it then? "No; it was done for me." What was done for you? Not what was commanded, for the command was, "Be baptized," and of course being baptized was not done for you. You were baptized yourself, were you not? Nobody was baptized in your place, as I understand. *Being baptized* was not, then, done for you? What was done for you? I ask again. "Well, the baptizing, then, was done for me, if you will be so very exact." Now I begin to understand. The baptizing was done for you. Then it was Christ's command to you, an infant, to baptize, and you being too young yourself to obey, somebody obeyed for you. Is that it? "No; certainly that is not it. The command to me was, 'Be baptized,' and not 'Baptize.'" Did you then obey the command, "Be baptized"? "No; I

was too young. It was obeyed for me." Well, no, not *that* command; for the being baptized was not done by anybody else for you. You were baptized yourself, you know. What the rest did was to baptize you and to have you baptized. The minister baptized you, and your friends had you baptized. The being baptized was done by you, if it was done by anybody. *Was* it done by you? "Certainly, I was baptized." Did you *do* the being baptized? "No; it was all done for me." But no; the being baptized was not done for you. Only the baptizing and the having baptized were done for you. You were baptized yourself, you say. The act of being baptized, then, was not done for you. Did you do it for yourself? "I did nothing whatever for myself." If then you did not obey the command, "Be baptized," and if your friends did not obey it for you, how, pray, was it obeyed at all? In your case it never has been obeyed. There it stands, as plain as letters can make it, "Be baptized." Instead of obeying it, you tell me you do not obey it. This language you use, not because you ever have obeyed it, and not because anybody ever obeyed it for you; but simply because somebody once did something else to you. Is that obedience on your part, or is it excuse for not obeying?

Another says, "I do not obey the command, 'Be baptized,' because I have obeyed it once, and no more is desired of me." How did you obey it? By being baptized in your infancy? "No; that

was no obedience, for I did nothing then myself. But since then I have adopted that unconscious act as my own, and this is my obedience." Yes, but there was no act of your own, conscious or unconscious, that you could afterward adopt. You did nothing whatever capable of being adopted as obedience to the command, "Be baptized." So far as the baptism was concerned you were simply acted upon. The only act conceivable as having then been done by you toward being baptized would be the inward resolution to be baptized. But this act of resolution you were not equal to, and this act therefore never existed. You have nothing that you can adopt. "Well, I deliberately, at one time, decided to regard that transaction as my baptism and act accordingly." Yes, and if "Be baptized" could fairly be interpreted to mean, "Regard a certain transaction as baptism," why then you could claim thus to have obeyed the command. But Christ does not say, "Regard something as baptism"; he says, "Be baptized." You do not obey. Instead of that you tell me of a substitute for obedience.

Another says—and I am able to use here the actual expression of a Pedobaptist writer, not hazarded in conversation, but deliberately committed to editorial print—"I accept my parents' act of baptism. Thus I suppose myself to have obeyed." You accept your parents' act of baptism, and that acceptance you count as your obedience. Let us see. What was your "parents' act of baptism"?

Their "act of baptism" was having you baptized; that, and nothing else was your "parents' act of baptism." This act of your parents in having you baptized you now accept. What do you mean by "accepting" that act? Do you mean regarding it as your own act? If you do you have performed a feat of intellectual sleight-of-hand indeed. You regard what your parents did as something that you did. But let this be supposed accomplished; still, how is this obedience to the command, "Be baptized"? Your parents did not obey that command in having you baptized. The command they obeyed, if any, was one running, say, "Have this child baptized." If, then, they in their act of baptism did not obey the command, "Be baptized," how can you suppose yourself to have obeyed that command in "accepting" their act? Does your "accepting" of their act put into their act what was not in it before your accepting of it? What ingenious futility in framing excuses for not obeying! Obeying would be easier as well as better!

Another says, "'Be baptized' may mean, 'Be in the condition of having once been baptized'; or it may mean 'Submit yourself to baptism.' I do not care to decide between the two." That is, Christ has told you to do either one or the other of two things, but you do not care which! Is this unconcern on your part consistent with a "tender desire to do your Lord's will"? Is not your unconcern, perhaps your excuse for not obeying, offered in place of obedience?

Another says, "Christ never bade, 'Be baptized.' Those are Peter's words, and Peter is not Christ." That such an excuse for not obeying is one sometimes really advanced the following recital will show. I quote from a letter received some time since. The occasion of the letter was a newspaper article, then recently published, in which this same view of obedience was urged. The incident will serve to make two things plain: first, that there are sensitive consciences among our Pedobaptist brethren; and, second, that these sensitive consciences are hard put to it to quiet themselves with excuses in place of obedience. I reproduce the italics of the writer of the letter:

"In conversation yesterday with the Rev. Mr. —, pastor of the — Street Congregational Church (and one of the most acute minds in the ministry here), reference was made to that article on 'Obedience and the Spirit of Obedience.' In reply to my question, 'How do you meet a thing of that kind?' he replied, 'When I first read that I fairly turned *white*; I thought *he had us sure*. It disturbed me. *I got no sleep that night*. I read it again the next day, and I said, *Surely* there *must be some way* out of this. So I read it the third time. Then I saw its *fallacy*. It is this: he lays down his premises in *commandments*, but *cunningly* proceeds to draw his conclusion from *ordinances*.' I denied the reality of his discovery, and added, 'But suppose you are correct, what follows? Is there any *real* distinction between a commandment and an

ordinance?’ His reply was to the effect that ‘*Christ* gave the commandments, but the apostles gave the ordinances; that the words of the latter do not carry the same force and authority as the former; that Jesus nowhere commanded anybody *to be baptized*; only the apostles did that.’ ”

That Jesus transferred the whole of his authority to his apostles in such a sense as to make their inspired teachings equally binding with his own, is a principle without which the Christian church could not exist. When Peter speaks under inspiration, as on the day of Pentecost, it is Christ speaking rather than Peter.

Still another says, “Baptism is an unimportant matter. Literalism in obeying is ritualism.” Then you do not think it necessary to obey the command “Be baptized,” and that is *your* reason for not obeying? “Oh, but I do obey; only I do not mind to obey exactly. The spirit is everything. If I have the spirit of obedience, that is obeying.” Do I understand, then, that you meet Christ saying to you, “Be baptized,” and, replying to him in effect, “Yes, Lord, I have the spirit of being baptized,” rest content with that? “Well, no, not exactly so. I do something that I call being baptized; but whether it really is being baptized I do not concern myself to inquire. It is the spirit of the rite, not the rite itself, that is important.” Just what do you mean by the spirit of the rite? Has the rite a spirit apart from you that perform the rite? “Suppose I say, ‘Yes, it has,’ what then?”

Why, then I shall ask you, How can we be sure that we retain the spirit of the rite unless we retain the rite itself? If the whole rite disappears, the whole spirit of the rite disappears with it, I suppose. But may a part of the rite go and the whole of the spirit of the rite stay? "Well, suppose now I say, 'No; the spirit of the rite is nothing, but the spirit of me who perform the rite is everything,' then what?" Why, then this: If the rite is of no account, and your spirit is of all account, which I understand you to hold, pray wherefore perform the rite at all? Have your spirit what it should be, and dismiss the rite altogether. It seems queer that *a* rite should be vital, and *the* rite be nothing at all in your eyes.

My Baptist brethren, let us see to it that we do not, we also, in our different way, offer to our Lord excuses for not obeying instead of obedience. Frank, open, ready, intelligent, but childlike obedience, not in one thing alone, but in all things; not in one thing chiefly, but in all things alike—this is safety for us, this is joy to our Lord. May he herein see in us all the travail of his soul and be satisfied!

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CLASSICAL PROOF-TEXTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM

PROOF-TEXTS may be defined as texts cited in proof of a doctrine that has already been decided upon and put into form. It is by no means always to be presumed that texts thus cited as proof-texts are the texts which originally furnished the doctrine that they are now brought forward to prove. Given a certain doctrine, little matter what the doctrine may be, it is almost an even chance that Scripture, properly ransacked, will be found to yield some text or texts capable of being applied in plausible support of the doctrine. Proof-texts ought assuredly to be selected with the most scrupulous honesty, and with the most scrupulous solicitude to be honest, on the part of those who propose them ; at the same time, on the part of those to whom they are proposed there is not only permissible, but obligatory, a degree of vigilance amounting well-nigh to incredulity, in scrutinizing the title that they bring to be considered, first pertinent, and then of convincing force.

I enter upon the present examination of certain classical proof-texts for infant baptism with a remark which, I trust, though it may greatly surprise,

or even scandalize some, will not be taken by any as offensively intended. I disclaim such intent when I say that among all the texts of Scripture customarily cited to attest the doctrine or practice of infant baptism there is not a text—not one solitary text—that were the doctrine or practice not already in the thought of the student would ever have so much as suggested the idea of it, in the faintest suspicion, to his mind. Now what is to be thought beforehand of a doctrine professing to be scriptural, the scriptural proof-texts for which are such, every one of them, as not only not explicitly to state the doctrine, but not doubtfully to imply it—nay, not remotely to hint it, with the smallest intelligible allusion? Yet such I affirm in advance to be the character of all, without exception, of the proof-texts for infant baptism that are generally cited, or further, that can be cited from any quarter whatever within the length and breadth of divine revelation. Let what I thus broadly affirm be judged by the unquestionable facts of the case.

I take the citations from Scripture subjoined to the article on infant baptism in the Westminster Confession of Faith. These are presumably the chief classic reliances of Pedobaptists for the defense of their tenet against Baptist objection. I propose then that we examine in succession all the proof-passages cited for infant baptism in this great historic symbol of faith.

The first is Gen. 17 : 7, 9, in comparison with Gal. 3 : 9, 14 :

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. . . And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep thy covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.”

“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Here we have—what? Why, mention of a “covenant” between God on the one side, and Abraham with his “seed after him,” on the other. This in Genesis. In the Galatians a fact is stated as the conclusion of an argument. What fact? The fact that the blessing promised to Abraham is a blessing made common also to others along with Abraham. To what others? To “them which be of faith,” an expression obviously equivalent to saying, “to those who truly believe” as did believing Abraham. Now, of course, this is the inspired interpretation in Galatians of the word “seed” used in Genesis. Who, then, constitute the “seed” after Abraham with whom the “covenant” is established? The answer—an unmistakable answer—is furnished in this passage of the Galatians with which we are invited by the Confession to compare the passage from Genesis. The “seed after” Abraham are those, Jew or Gentile,

who exercise faith. Now surely that infant baptism is not present here in any smallest hint of the notion, it would be sufficient to say. Something more, however, than this may pertinently be said. It may, for instance, be said that infant baptism is so far from being contained here by any valid though occult implication, that the just and the salient implication of the passage absolutely forbids the very idea of it. For if baptism be considered a "sign" of the "covenant" mentioned—as such replacing circumcision—then the new sign, baptism, should evidently, like the old sign, circumcision, be limited to those included within the covenant. Those included within the covenant Paul clearly states to be those that believe. Do infants believe?

The next passage cited in proof of infant baptism is Rom. 4 : 11, 12 :

"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised ; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised : that righteousness might be imputed unto them also : and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

What have we here ? Circumcision is spoken of as the "sign" of a faith on Abraham's part exercised by him before being circumcised. This sign,

it is said, Abraham received *after*, not before, exercising faith (that point is made very emphatic), for a particular reason. What reason? This: In order that he might so stand as father to Gentiles not less than to Jews; since Gentiles must needs exercise faith, if they exercise faith at all, without having been previously circumcised. In other words, if Abraham had, like his descendants, received circumcision in advance of exercising faith, he would thereby have failed to be a true father of Gentile believers. But why would he thereby have thus failed? Evidently because these all were to be called upon to exercise faith before being admitted to membership in the spiritual Israel. Baptism before faith is thus impliedly excluded. If baptism is to be considered in any way a substitute for circumcision, the irresistible implication of the passage is that baptism must be in the case of the Gentiles as circumcision was in Abraham's case, a sign of the faith that those receiving it must exercise being yet unbaptized. The whole purport of the passage is to show that Gentiles as much as Jews are inheritors of the blessing promised to Abraham—that, in other words, the blessing follows, not the natural, but the spiritual line of descent. Not those derived from the loins of Abraham, but those that walk in the steps of Abraham's faith—these are Abraham's true children, and so joint-heirs with Abraham of the covenanted blessing. It is a sheer mistaking of this whole apostolic representation—nay, a point-blank inversion of it—

to conceive that children springing by natural descent from believers are by virtue of such descent promised the blessing of Abraham. But even if thus to conceive were as sound as, in fact, it is unsound, still to conceive further that therefore there is here any suggestion whatever of infant baptism is the purest gratuity. Baptism, in so far as it is the sign of a blessing at all, is the sign, not of a blessing that is yet to be received, but of a blessing that has been already received. Thus too, in so far as baptism is the sign of faith, it is the sign not of faith to be exercised in the future, but like circumcision in Abraham's case, of faith that has been exercised in the past. Such is the plain implication of what Paul says in the passage that we have thus examined.

The next proof-passage is Acts 2 : 38, 39 :

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Here the promise—that is, the promise of the Holy Ghost—is said to be destined for the Israelites of Peter's day, together with their "children," and for as many besides these as may be "*called*." As has before been pointed out, the Greek word for "children" is one which has not the smallest reference to the age, infant or adult, of the persons so

designated. It simply means "posterity," "descendants." This is all that the word means; but if the word meant infants, as it does not, and only infants, as yet more it does not, still the sense of the passage would be that the Holy Spirit was promised, on a certain condition, to infants. There would be in it no possible allusion to the practice of infant baptism, unless the allusion were to be found in the command, "Be baptized," which command, in that case, being addressed in the second person to the subjects, would necessarily have to be obeyed by the subjects themselves or not be obeyed at all. And then as those same subjects are also commanded beforehand in the same breath to "Repent," it is to be supposed that obedience to the second command would be preceded by obedience to the first, whereby the infant baptism referred to would be baptism of infant believers, and thus not in the least the same practice with the infant baptism known to the ecclesiastical usage of to-day.

The next proof-passage is Acts 16 : 14, 15 :

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

From this passage it appears that at Philippi, Lydia, an itinerant vender of purple from Thyatira,

was converted and baptized. Her household was baptized with her ; hence infant baptism ! Consider the assumptions, purely gratuitous, which this Pedobaptist inference implies : it implies the assumption, *first*, that Lydia was a mother ; *second*, that she was at that time the mother of at least one infant ; *third*, that this infant was with her while she sojourned in Philippi ; *fourth*, that the infant was baptized. Besides, if this passage teaches that an infant was baptized in virtue of Lydia's faith, it just as much teaches that the adult members of Lydia's household were baptized on the same ground.

With the foregoing passage is to be associated another, likewise cited in the Westminster Confession—namely, the account occurring in the same chapter of the baptism of the jailer's household :

“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”

The verse preceding this states that to the jailer and “to all that were in his house” “the word of the Lord” was spoken. The verse following states that the jailer “rejoiced, *believing* in God with all his house.” The jailer and all that were in his house were preached to, the jailer and all his house rejoiced, believing, the jailer and all his house were baptized ; hence infant baptism ! Well, Baptists are ready, always and everywhere, to baptize infants that may be preached to, and that having been baptized rejoice believing. That kind of in-

fant baptism they highly approve. The more of it the better.

The next proof-passage is Col. 2 : 11, 12 :

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Hence infant baptism ! An exclamation point is really all the comment that such a citation requires.

The next proof-text is 1 Cor. 7 : 14 :

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.”

Here it is said that in some sense a heathen husband is “sanctified,” or made holy (the Greek for “sanctified” is one and the same in root with the Greek for “holy”), by the Christian wife, while likewise the heathen wife is made holy in some sense by the Christian husband; for which reason the offspring too, otherwise unclean, are “holy”; hence infant baptism! Again, nothing else could be so appropriate a comment as mere punctuation on an inference like this. Do not Pedobaptists see that if the “holiness” here said to attach under certain circumstances to children, entitles those children to baptism, the same “holiness” said equally to attach, under like circumstances, to the heathen husband or wife, en-

titles that heathen husband or wife also to baptism? If infant baptism is here, then a good deal more than infant baptism is here—a good deal more than no earnest Pedobaptist would desire to find.

The next proof-text is Matt. 28 : 19:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Christ says, Make all the nations disciples, baptizing *them*—that is, the disciples. Hence baptize infants *before* you make them disciples! For a fuller treatment of this text the reader is referred to Chapters VIII. and IX. of the present volume.

The next proof-passage is Mark 10 : 13-16:

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

Here an occasion is described on which, if ever it was to occur, the Saviour would baptize infants. He does not do so, he does not command to do so, he does not say anything whatever about such a thing; hence infant baptism! Luke 18 : 15-17 is a similar account, of which a similar remark may be made. And so closes the whole presentation of the

scriptural case for infant baptism as it is set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The writers on rhetoric warn us that there is such a thing as refuting excessively. One may, they tell us, go so far in destroying the arguments of an adversary that that adversary will be rather vexed than persuaded. I feel that Baptists arguing with Pedobaptists are constantly in danger of committing this rhetorical blunder. People generally are not fond of admitting that they have really no good reason whatever for their beliefs. But then if infant baptism is wholly non-scriptural, as Baptists firmly maintain it to be, why is it strange that Scripture should contain not simply not much, but absolutely not a shred, of evidence in its favor? Not one shred of evidence in a case in which, since certainly the question concerns a very important matter alike of faith and of practice, there should, if infant baptism is truly scriptural, be found to be an ample web of evidence from Scripture—a web woven both close and strong. We have an obvious dilemma. Either infant baptism is scriptural or it is not. If it is not, then Scripture of course should know nothing of it. And can any candid and intelligent Pedobaptist consider well the case for it thus presented in the classical proof-texts of the Westminster Confession, and laying his hand on his heart say that he should ever so much as have thought of infant baptism from reading these texts if infant baptism had not been previously in his mind?

The thoughtful ponderer of these proof-texts will of course perceive that there was in the mind of those who prepared them the underlying idea of a relation between circumcision and infant baptism such that the latter supersedes or replaces the former. The relation between circumcision and infant baptism I elsewhere in this volume consider sufficiently at large under the title of "Scriptural Infant Baptism." Here, however, I have a simple suggestion to make bearing on the same point. Let me ask Pedobaptists this question: Suppose it established and granted that there is indeed a well-warranted rite of infant baptism designed to take the place of circumcision; still, how does it follow thence that infant baptism should take the place of baptism subsequently received on personal profession of faith? Circumcision certainly did not do this. Why then should infant baptism do it if it merely takes the place of circumcision, as the anti-type when it arrives takes the place of the type that had preceded and prefigured it?

CHAPTER XIX

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S *OBITER DICTUM* ON INFANT BAPTISM

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S "Rhetoric," like everything else from the pen of that eminently sensible writer, is full of just and sound and wise suggestion. The things in it that are said as if incidentally and by the way, the *obiter dicta*, are often not less valuable than the things that belong to the main drift of discussion. It is one of the most salient characteristics of this book that the illustrations are generally much more than illustrations. The didactic bent of the author is a gravely moral didactic bent ; and if he gives an example of a certain species of argument he is very apt to make his example teach some independent practical lesson of its own. The opinions of the writer on a great variety of topics are thus put into the possession of the reader.

A curious case of characteristic illustration, in which the clergyman of the Church of England qualifies the author of a treatise on rhetoric, occurs on pages 144, 145 of the American (New York) edition. The archbishop (and it seems doubly natural and fit to name him such in the present connection) is engaged with discussing the topic of the

burden of proof. He seeks to show how desirable it is for the person arguing not to undertake the burden of establishing a point which it does not fairly belong to him to establish. The following is one of his examples :

“ The burden of proof, again, lay on the authors of the Reformation : they were bound to show cause for every *change* they advocated ; and they admitted the fairness of this requisition and accepted the challenge. But they were not bound to show cause for *retaining* what they left unaltered. [It is a weakness of this strong writer to be fond of his italics.] The presumption was, in these points, on their side ; and they had only to reply to objections. This important distinction is often lost sight of by those who look at the doctrines, etc., of the Church of England, as constituted at the Reformation, in the mass, without distinguishing the altered from the unaltered parts. The framers of the Articles kept this in mind in their expression respecting infant baptism, that it ought by all means to be *retained*. They did not introduce the practice, but left it as they found it, considering the burden to lie on those who denied its existence in the primitive church to show *when* it did arise.”

The archbishop here—and the guess seems confirmed by the fact that this passage is matter added by the author to his treatise after his ecclesiastical promotion—the archbishop here, I cannot but think, was a little too much for the logician. If it should be conceded that there was a burden of proof rest-

ing fairly on Baptist reformers to show that infant baptism did not originate in New Testament times, this, I think, would overpass the utmost limit of concession logically incumbent on them to make; but to show *when* it did originate—that surely would be a transparently absurd burden of proof for them to have assumed. Nearly (not quite) parallel would it be for a Christian apologist, denying the right of Jupiter to divine worship, to assume the task of showing *when* the worship of Jupiter, if it was not coeval with the creation of man, did originate. In truth, however, the archbishop would almost seem to have seduced the logician to forget the general principle that the burden of proof properly belongs always to him who affirms. At all events the idea that the exact historical moment of the origin of infant baptism must be ascertained by the opponents of that practice before the unscripturalness of it can be established, is a monstrous assumption. Even the idea that it logically belonged to the Reformers to bring positive argument against any practice of the Roman Catholic Church in order to show that practice unscriptural is not to be admitted. Such an idea rests upon the assumption that, independent of other proof, the mere existence of a Roman Catholic ecclesiastical usage affords presumptive evidence that the usage is scriptural. This assumption will not stand for one moment. It would have more plausibility if it were true that the Roman Catholic Church claimed to be exclusively scriptural in doctrine and usage.

There would then be the probability in its favor arising from ostensible general consent. The fact, however, is that the Roman Catholic Church makes tradition of co-ordinate authority with Scripture; so that not even to the loyal child of the church does a presumption exist that a given ecclesiastical usage is scriptural. Where the question is not one of Scripture at all—where, on the contrary, it is simply a question of expediency—there I readily grant it might rest on the man who opposes what exists—that is, it might rest on him as practically necessary, though by no means as logically necessary—to show cause why it should not exist. Quite otherwise is it in a case like that of infant baptism. To say that simply because infant baptism is a usage of the Roman Catholic Church, therefore it is probably a scriptural usage—this it would perhaps do for a bishop to preach in the discharge of his episcopal functions, but it will hardly do for a logician to assert in a treatise on rhetoric. I mean, of course, that in a sermon addressed to hearers like-minded with the preacher such a point would probably pass without challenge; but a challenge sooner or later it must inevitably meet occurring in a formal text-book of science. The only sound principle in a question like this is to maintain that logically, on every usage claiming to be scriptural, the burden of proof forever lies to show itself scriptural. Let infant baptism accept its proper burden and bear the burden if it can.

I cite Whately against Whately—Whately the Protestant against Whately the Pedobaptist unconsciously disguising himself from himself in the mask of a teacher of rhetoric. In his treatise on "Corruptions of Christianity" (p. 143, American edition), Whately adopts from Bishop Hurd's "Rise and Progress of Christianity," the following just sentiments, which, had they been opportunely present to the archbishop's mind at the proper moment, might have exerted a happy influence in modifying his curious *obiter dictum* on infant baptism :

"It might seem at first that the apostolic precedents were literally binding on all ages ; but this cannot have been intended ; and for this reason, that the greater portion of the apostolic practices have been transmitted to us, not on apostolic authority, but on the authority of the uninspired church, which has handed them down with an uncertain mixture of its own appointments. *How are we to know the enactments of the inspired rulers from the uninspired ?*" The italics are my own.

Whately advances to other examples illustrative of the topic of the burden of proof. In doing so he proposes—or seems to propose, for this painstakingly perspicuous writer becomes here discomposingly vague—a distinction between *usage* and *doctrine* as to the proper place for the burden of proof. The usage would appear, according to him, to be its own evidence, while the doctrine must bring evidence for itself from Scripture. "The fair *presumption*" is, he says, that all "*doctrines*"

“professing to be essential parts of the gospel revelation” will be found “distinctly declared in Scripture.” “If any one maintains,” Whately continues, “on the ground of tradition, the necessity of some additional article of faith (as, for instance, that of purgatory) or the propriety of a departure from the New Testament precepts (as, for instance, in the denial of the cup to the laity in the Eucharist), the burden of proof lies with him. We are not called on to prove that there is no tradition to the purpose—much less that no tradition can have any weight at all in *any* case.”

The Protestant archbishop overlies once more the logical writer on rhetoric. Surely if infant baptism is a usage, the Lord’s Supper in one kind is a usage no less. It is hard to see how in the case of infant baptism the burden of proof lies on one side, while in the case of the Supper in one kind the burden of proof lies on the other. Whately seems to imply that the Supper in one kind transgresses a precept—I suppose the precept, “Drink ye *all* of it.” But is that precept any more distinct and specific than the precept, “Be *every one* of you baptized,” addressed as a command to those capable of rendering obedience? Yet infant baptism as a usage prevents the compliance of believers with a definite precept of Christ’s as much as does denial of wine to the laity. For those who are baptized in infancy, although they do not in being so baptized obey any command, are practically prevented from subsequent obedience by the usage of infant baptism;

which usage, be it observed, includes not simply the act itself but also the superseding of any fulfillment whatever of the command undertaken voluntarily on the part of the believer.

Besides, the distinction attempted to be established by Whately between usage and doctrine as to the methods of proof severally applicable, is a vicious distinction. Each ecclesiastical usage has a doctrine connected with it. In truth, the usage is itself a doctrine expressed in act or symbol.

The matter is capable of being presented in a different way. Whately commends the decision of the framers of the Articles as to infant baptism—their decision to the effect that it ought to be *retained*. Now why ought it to be retained? Because it had existed previously. But of course not for that bare reason. No; for the reason implied in that reason, namely—Well, what? How would Whately express himself? It seems doubtful, his language not being quite clear. Would he say, “Infant baptism ought to be retained, because the fact that it existed raised a presumption that it was scriptural”? Hardly; for the practice of the Roman Catholic Church did not profess to be scriptural exclusively, and therefore, so far was the existence of a practice from proving that the practice was scriptural, the existence of it did not even prove that anybody thought it was scriptural. Would he say, “Infant baptism ought to be retained because the fact that it existed raised a presumption that it was, though not scriptural, still

coeval with the origin of the Christian church"? That, then, makes tradition co-ordinate with Scripture in authority, which surrenders at once the whole Protestant principle.

The presumption from the existence of the practice, accordingly, is not necessarily either that infant baptism is scriptural or that Rome conceived it to be scriptural; it is not even that infant baptism is coeval with Christianity. It is simply that Rome chose to define it as being so. The presumption supposed by Whately practically vanishes altogether, and the opposite presumption rather obtains.

If we were disposed to push the *argumentum ad hominem* against Whately, we might say with reference to infant baptism what he says with reference to purgatory and the Lord's Supper in one kind: "It is for *him* to prove, not merely generally that there is such a tradition [for Whately apparently gives up proof from Scripture in favor of infant baptism, and virtually relies on tradition] and that it is entitled to respect, but that there is a tradition relative to each of the points which he thus maintains, and that such tradition is on each point sufficient to establish that point."

I propose a dilemma. Either the presumption conceived by Whately to lie in favor of infant baptism on account of the existence of the practice at the time of the Reformation—either this presumption is a real presumption, a sound logical one, one that belongs to the reason of the case, or else it is

a merely relative presumption, having its support in the opinions of a class of people, and therefore well or ill founded, according as their opinions are wise or unwise. In the latter alternative the presumption is not a logical, but only a practical presumption; not one that the opponents of the practice are bound to meet, but only one that as to a class of people they will find it desirable to meet if they wish to convince that class. Either, then, the presumption is absolute, sound in itself, warranted by reason, or it is relative, existing merely in the prejudice of some, a subjective presumption. Which is it?

Let us suppose the former—an inherently valid presumption. But now just what is this presumption, supposed to be valid? Here we are left in necessary doubt, for Whately's language is vague. *First*, it seems the presumption that infant baptism is, indefinitely, a thing that "ought to be retained"—retained, but *why* retained does not clearly appear. *Next*, it seems that infant baptism is, more definitely, "coeval with the primitive church"—this as distinguished from being scriptural. As we advance and find tradition impliedly set aside by the writer, the presumption finally seems to be that infant baptism is scriptural.

It is really difficult to argue with a writer who expresses himself so loosely as Whately surprises us by doing in this place. For instance, closely consider what he says in the following sentence: "In the case of any *doctrines*, again [as if infant

baptism were not a doctrine as well as a practice!], professing to be essential parts of the gospel revelation, the fair presumption is that we shall find all such [that is, all such as *profess* to be essential parts of the gospel revelation] distinctly declared in Scripture." Understood strictly, this is a ridiculous assertion. I use the adjective deliberately ; it is simply a ridiculous assertion. For what does it say ? It says that any doctrine claiming to be an essential part of gospel revelation is, *ipso facto*—that is, solely by virtue of its own claim for itself—to be presumed scriptural. Simply because a doctrine makes the pretension, the presumption is that the pretension is true ! That is what Whately says, but it is, of course, not what Whately means. He means that a doctrine professing to be a part of gospel revelation, *if it be really such*, will presumably be found plainly stated in Scripture—a very good meaning, however ill expressed, and applicable to the *doctrine* underlying the practice of infant baptism.

But we were trying to examine the validity of Whately's presumption in favor of infant baptism. We find this difficult to accomplish, because it is difficult to ascertain what the presumption is whose validity we are testing.

If the presumption be this, that infant baptism ought to be retained simply because it exists, then the same presumption holds in favor of retaining the whole system of Romanism, since that also exists. But as soon as we begin to reform a system

we abandon the presumption in favor of that system ; we challenge the whole system to show cause for its continuing to be. To us at least who assume to reform the system, no presumption lies in favor of the system : it is under judgment. To us it stands or falls, part by part, as part by part it can demonstrate or not its title to be. Practically, it may be convenient and wise to let stand what we do not see reason to overthrow ; but logically, when once we have begun to reform, to us there is no longer presumption in favor of retaining. If Whately's presumption, therefore, be that infant baptism should go on existing, simply because it exists, the presumption is not sound—at least, such seems to be the common sense of the matter. But, however this may be decided, it still is quite wide of any right course of discussion on a point like infant baptism seriously to go through the process of weighing the presumption that a thing ought to go on being merely because it is found being. We may well enough grant that, even in ecclesiastical matters, some things should exist which are not distinctly set forth in Scripture ; but such things must not claim to be scriptural, and they must not claim to be divinely ordained in any other than that general sense in which all things desirable are a part of divine providence. If the presumption, therefore, be that infant baptism ought to exist purely because it has existed and does exist, I challenge even that presumption, but waive my challenge, and say that in such a discussion as the

present the presumption is impertinent and null. "Has infant baptism *special* divine authority in its favor?" is the question. That question the presumption alluded to does not even touch.

What would touch it, is a presumption that infant baptism is scriptural, which we have seen to be an unsound presumption. What would touch it, is, again, a presumption that infant baptism, though not scriptural, is yet of apostolic institution. This presumption depends upon history, or in default of history, on tradition. There is no history; and tradition, if there were that, is not to be trusted.

We go, accordingly, to the other horn of our dilemma. The presumption, whatever the presumption be guessed to be, is not a presumption valid in logic. It must therefore be, if it exist at all in any sense, merely a relative presumption, which in plain language we had better call by the name of what it is—a prejudice. The presumption in favor of infant baptism is thus simply a prejudice existing in men's minds. In what men's minds? Why, of course, in the minds of those men who approve infant baptism. But those men will raise no "objections" to the practice. The "objections" to be "replied" to, which Whately's language represents him as conceiving to arise, will proceed from those who do not approve, but oppose, infant baptism; who, therefore, have no prejudice or presumption in favor of the practice. The prejudice, accordingly, or presumption—call it by whatever name you will—is absolutely without aggressive

argumentative force. It cannot be appealed to in the course of controversial discussion, for the very good reason that it has no existence in the minds of those against whom the argument is conducted. Such a presumption has nothing whatever to do with the matter of burden of proof. The true place of the burden of proof cannot be determined by it, since it is itself a purely relative and subjective thing, never for a moment even existing where it is once candidly denied to exist.

If the Pedobaptist and the anti-pedobaptist meet for discussion of Pedobaptism, each seeking to make a convert of the other, evidently the proper course for either to pursue would be this: Abandoning any and every presumption that exists only for himself, to try conclusions quite as if such presumption were out of the question. The Pedobaptist on the one part would know that, unless he could bring positive argument to establish his view, his antagonist would, ostrich-like, plunge his head deep in the sand of his cherished imaginary presumption and successfully resist contrary conviction; while on the other part the anti-pedobaptist would, in default of positive confutation, hold out for his opinion despite any presumption existing in his adversary's mind which he himself did not acknowledge to be real and sound. This merely relative presumption, existing for only one side of the dispute, in itself a pure prejudice, justified or not according to the reason on which it rests—a reason to be canvassed freely as if there were no

foreclosing consideration in the case—such a prepossession, I say, self-evidently, has no force to devolve the burden of proof either this way or that. A counterpoising presumption may always conceivably be adduced. If, for instance, the Pedobaptist says, “I presume that infant baptism ought to stand, because it is a part of Roman Catholicism,” the anti-pedobaptist may reply, “*I* presume—and for the same reason—that it ought *not* to stand.” Here are two presumptions opposing each other, presumably of equal validity. Let them destroy each other and leave the burden of proof unaffected.

The burden of proof in every case is assumed by that party, whichever it is, who *begins* the discussion with affirming his view. If he is able on challenge to appeal to a consideration which creates a presumption, admittedly valid, in his favor, then that appeal instantly shifts the burden of proof to the contrary side. If the contrary side is able to adduce a consideration outweighing this first presumption, then the burden of proof returns to its original place. It continues exchanging its place to the end of the argument. If at the end the affirmer shall appear to have advanced an argument not answered by his opponent, then the affirmer has prevailed. If on the other hand every argument advanced by the affirmer has been satisfactorily answered, then the burden of proof rests still with him. He must lift it and shift it, or he has been beaten. It is enough always to resist mere

affirmation with mere denial. One man's "No" is to be supposed as good as another man's "Yes." The affirmer must meet a challenge of his affirmation with proffer of proof; the burden of proving belongs to him. If he can begin by pointing to a presumption in his favor, he has done all that in the first instance can logically be demanded. The slightest argument, presumption or other, advanced by him shifts the burden of proof to the side of him who denies. The burden of proof, I say, lies with the affirmer; but this is not in the least because there is some presumption capable of being alleged against him. The burden of proof lies with the affirmer simply because he affirms. The simple truth is, Whately was too much a sectary to be a logician when he was using the present illustration. His practical interest always did predominate over his speculative. This disposition of his mind saved him from many errors, but it at the same time involved him in some errors.

It is a great thing to escape the effect of environment. Few—none perhaps—do this. We have to watch ourselves constantly, and we have to watch others, or else what is mere unconscious prejudice will again and again impose itself on us for right reason and logic. Pedobaptism is not necessarily out of place even in a treatise on rhetoric; but lame logic is out of place wherever it hobbles.

CHAPTER XX

HOW INFANT BAPTISM PREPARED FOR THE PAPACY

THE Baptist depends on the Bible, and not on history—or if on history, then only on the history contained in the Bible—for the peculiar views which he holds in distinction from the Pedobaptist. Still, extra-biblical history—that is, history outside of the Bible—he also finds full of confirmatory instruction on his distinguishing tenets. He does not look primarily to any consequences of disobedience to Christ, to teach him either the duty or the importance of obedience. That such obedience is a duty, and that the duty is important, are points to him sufficiently plain from the Bible. The importance, however, of the duty of obeying Christ—the importance, observe, of the duty, not the duty itself—he recognizes as yet further most impressively illustrated by the teachings of history respecting the consequences of disobedience.

Take, for example, the matter of infant baptism. Whether infant baptism obeys Christ or not is a question which can be answered only from Scripture ; whether that question itself is highly important or not is a point which can well be illustrated from history. If it should turn out that but for in-

fant baptism the Papacy could never have arisen, this indeed would not prove that infant baptism was unscriptural. For it is also true that but for Christianity the Papacy could not have arisen ; and certainly Christianity is scriptural. But it emphatically would prove that infant baptism, if it is a deviation from Scripture, is a deviation from Scripture of very considerable moment.

Now, precisely this, I suppose, can be demonstrated—namely, that infant baptism was indeed a condition without which the Papacy could not have been developed. Mark, if you please, I do not affirm that infant baptism was the producing cause of the Papacy. I affirm only, and this I undertake to demonstrate, that infant baptism, whether scriptural or not, was a necessary, an indispensable, precedent and concomitant condition of the development of the Papacy. I seek thus to show that the question of the scripturalness or unscripturalness of infant baptism is not a question to be dismissed as of little practical importance. The question is of great practical importance ; and those who support infant baptism assume a grave responsibility in doing so. On the other hand, Baptists who oppose infant baptism—or rather who maintain a principle of obedience to Christ inconsistent with infant baptism—have not taken their stand on behalf of a barren, however abstractly valid, principle. I believe it may be made to appear rationally probable that the simple acceptance in good faith, and the consistent practice, of the Bap-

tist principle of obedience to Christ *applied solely to the matter of baptism*, would have been by itself sufficient to render the development of the Papacy, with all the dreadful mischiefs incident to that system, historically impossible.

Of course I do not mean that if, in addition to those other matters of commandment which actually did receive the attention of the Christian world, the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ had been applied to the matter of baptism, that difference alone would have made the Christian world so much better that it would have escaped, as by its own enhanced and superior virtue, the corruptions of which I have spoken ; I mean nothing so absurd as a claim like that would be. What I mean is, that with no more of the Christian spirit existing than really did exist, yet if that Christian spirit had taken the direction of obedience to Christ in the matter of baptism, this one additional circumstance of outward conformity alone, trifling though it may seem, is such, in its inevitable practical tendency, as, had it taken place, to have precluded the possibility of the Papacy. Remember, I do not say that neglect to obey Christ in this one particular article of his will, produced the Papacy. No ; that great corruption had a deeper root than this, or than any, specific act of disobedience. I do say, however, that without the specific act of disobedience which occurred in the matter of baptism the particular form of corruption which we call the Papacy could not have taken its rise. In

short, Pedobaptism did not originate the Papacy, but Pedobaptism made the Papacy possible.

How ? In this way: The indiscriminate baptism of infants—and of adults as well, without reference to their previous regeneration, which has been the Roman Catholic practice, justified by the same reasoning that justifies infant baptism—introduced a constantly increasing, and, of course, in the end a greatly preponderating element of unregenerate membership into the church. This nominally Christian, but essentially worldly and hostile, element in the church was not passive there ; on the contrary, it was self-asserting and active. Instinctively, habitually, intensely, it sought to serve itself. Its spirit was the spirit of the world and of the devil. It behaved itself after the fashion of its kind. It was ambitious, greedy, grasping. It was always watching its chance for self-aggrandizement. The pure and spiritual portion of the church it outnumbered and outvoted. It had no scruples and it could with corresponding advantage reach out its hand to clutch pre-eminence and power. As fast as by the perfectly natural tendency of things an hereditary succession to church-membership made the church gradually coincident and identical with society, so fast the various offices of the church became objects of ambition to unscrupulous self-seekers. The development of the Papacy, with all its attendant evils, was the result—and it was a perfectly legitimate, a simply natural, result—of such a state of things. That the originally spiritual

church should change its character and become a vast temporal establishment, was to have been expected. The secular spirit could not but secularize the church of which it had taken dominant possession.

The point which I here make—that only through infant baptism, or through some equivalent perversion of the will of Christ, could the necessary condition have been supplied for the complete and permanent secularization of the church, and so for the development of a corruption like the Papacy—is a point calculated to strike the evangelical Pedobaptist with incredulity, with amazement, even with horror. It may be well to pause and reason the matter calmly and candidly.

The Pedobaptist objector will be likely to ask, “Is not the world itself, in the midst of which the church has its present place of sojourn—appointed still to be in it, though not of it—is not this omnipresent, this unescapable, this penetrating world a force without for secularization, a force incessantly operative? Is not this an external force strong enough to dispense with any reinforcement from a source within, such as you imagine infant baptism to be, in producing an historic effect like the Papacy? Has not your polemic sectarian zeal in behalf of a favorite tenet led you to make, in short, the pregnant discovery of a very fine mare’s nest? Surely we of this country and this age see enough right before our faces of the influence of the world in secularizing the church to teach us a wiser

philosophy of history than what you are propounding."

Well, let us fairly consider the objection. The point, be it borne in mind, against which the objection is brought is this: The church, in order to be thoroughly and permanently secularized, must be operated upon by a secularizing force supplied from within itself and working within itself. Such a secularizing force is furnished in infant baptism, and could not be furnished in anything else than infant baptism or something of an equivalent nature. Against this the objection is brought that the world outside of the church is of itself a force adequate to produce the effect in question.

I say, No. What is a secularized church? It is a church in which the worldly spirit not merely exists, but is dominant. It is a church, therefore, in which the members are most of them worldly men. Now what was there in the primitive church to tempt worldly men to join it? At first very little—something, no doubt, for a few worldly men apparently did join it. Gradually however after a time, as the church gained common credit, worldly men would be attracted to join it in order to share this credit. Such a tendency of things we may any of us observe existing now. This tendency is of course a tendency toward secularization of the church. If in any case the tendency went forward indefinitely, the issue of course would be thorough secularization at last. But the tendency does not in any case go forward indefinitely; it comprehends

always within itself a law of necessary, inevitable self-limitation. When the world has thus flowed into the church long enough and strong enough to bring down the general average reputation of the church quite to equality with the world, the temptation to worldly men to join the church is then exhausted. One of two things now happens: Either the church reforms itself, expelling the secular and secularizing element, or else the church succumbs and ceases to exist. This line of argument respects the case of a church continuing to exist only by being recruited from the world through the voluntary accession of persons professing conversion, as a condition precedent to membership—a church, that is to say, in which infant baptism is not practised, a church such as, emphatically, the Roman Catholic Church is not. Certain it is that a church depending on voluntary accessions from the world to prolong its life will not have its life prolonged when accessions from the world cease; and accessions from the world tempted by worldly motives—that is, accessions consisting of unregenerate persons, accessions composing the secularizing element—will no longer come to the church after worldly motives cease to draw them. The dilemma therefore is rigorous. The church will either cease to exist or cease to be secular.

The argument thus seems complete and demonstrative—if an argument probable in its nature can ever be demonstrative—that Pedobaptism supplied a necessary condition of the Papacy. To show in

sequel and complement how the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ applied to the matter of baptism would have worked to prevent this disastrous historic result will be the aim of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW BAPTIST PRACTICE WOULD HAVE PREVENTED THE PAPACY

WE have in the present chapter to consider how the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ in the matter of baptism would have operated in prevention of the Papacy. This Baptist principle is often misconceived. It should be steadily borne in mind that not immersion for baptism, but baptism only to actual converts, is the real chief distinguishing tenet of Baptists.

Under the prevalence of this principle none, of course, would have been baptized but supposed converts, voluntary candidates professing belief and honestly desiring to yield obedience. The nominal church, both according to the Roman Catholic idea and according to the Baptist idea, properly consists of baptized persons, and only of such. The difference however between these two ideas respecting the church is more serious than the resemblance. Rome baptizes without reference to precedent regeneration, while Baptists make precedent regeneration a condition of baptism. Under the dominance, therefore, of this Baptist idea, the nominal church would have consisted—not indeed exclusively, but always, it is to be presumed, preponder-

antly—of regenerate persons. I speak now as it were in the gross, and in the language of a large generalization. Temporary exceptions might conceivably occur—in a case, for example, like that of the conversion, so called, of Constantine, or like that of the conventionally pious Louis XIV. of France. Such influence would set a fashion of professing religion and tempt many not regenerate to make the religious profession; but the fashion would be temporary, for the influence would be temporary on which it depended. To produce a continuously and permanently secularized church there would be necessary two conditions—namely, *first*, a secularizing influence to operate permanently and continuously; and *second*, opportunity for this secularizing influence to operate from within, and not from without. A secularizing influence operating upon the church from without might, no doubt, succeed in secularizing the church for a time; but not for an indefinitely long time, for the tendency of a secularization so effected would be to extinguish the church; which result would be certain to ensue, unless the church roused itself betimes to expel the secularizing influence. I therefore repeat again here what I said in the foregoing chapter: For the church to continue to exist, and at the same time continue to be secularized, it was necessary that there should be a spring of secularizing influence supplied from within itself and working within itself. Such an internal spring of secularizing influences, flowing perennially, was furnished in the

doctrine and practice of infant baptism. On the other hand, with the Baptist doctrine and practice of obedience to Christ in force as to the matter of baptism, the church would scarcely at any moment—certainly for no great number of consecutive moments—have included within its communion a preponderant element of unregenerate souls. Some such souls no doubt it might often—perhaps would always—have included. The really regenerate too would not have been perfectly sanctified, and so corruptions would have found entrance into the church.

But note now the difference between the case supposed and the case that actually existed. In the case supposed—that is, under the sway of Baptist principles applied to baptism—the corruptions entering would have been discovered by the vigilance and withstood by the fidelity of the spiritual majority. Besides, a church thus composed of the elect regenerate would never have tempted to any great degree the ambition or the cupidity of self-seeking men ; there would always have abounded outside of such a church opportunities of self-aggrandizement far more attractive than any to be found within it. A corruption like that of the Papacy would thus, in the case of a church true to the Baptist principle of obedience to Christ in the matter of baptism, have lacked two indispensable conditions of successful development—namely, *first*, opportunity ; and *second*, temptation offered to ecclesiastical usurpers.

But even if these things were not as I have claimed, still it would be true that such a church would constantly have been surrounded by a vastly outnumbering society of non-professors who would never have had any motive to submit to the despotism of ecclesiastical usurpers, or to suffer any such monstrous displays of corruption and pride as largely make up the history of the Papal See. Whatever usurpations of power might nevertheless have occurred, these would at least have been confined to a comparatively insignificant church for their theatre. The terrors of excommunication would have been utterly null. There would have been no such thing attempted as spiritual discipline enforced by temporal sanctions over the consciences and lives of men. The whole dreadful incubus of ecclesiastical superstition that rested for so many ages on the bosom of the nominal Christian church, almost extinguishing the very breath of its life, would have been dissipated as fast as it could ever have begun to be formed.

But to the course of argument immediately foregoing and to that presented in the previous chapter I hear the objection: All this is pure speculation. Give us facts, not theories. We want to learn, not what must happen on *a priori* principles, but what has happened as simple matter of history.

This demand I acknowledge to be reasonable, and I reply: Instances in plenty exist of churches that have become secularized, and that having become secularized continue to be churches notwith-

standing their secularization. The Roman Catholic Church is an instance ; the Greek Church is an instance ; the Lutheran Church of every country where the Lutheran Church is an establishment of State, is an instance ; the New England churches such as Jonathan Edwards found them, are instances. But in every one of these instances the secularizing force was of the church itself, and was renewed within the church by infant baptism.

I shift the burden of proof, and I ask objectors to my argument to produce an instance of the other kind—namely, an instance of a church that has become secularized (and that has continued afterward to be a church) through the working of a force exterior to the organization of the church itself. One such instance would be fatal to my argument. I know of none, but I freely expose myself to be confuted with an example.

I cannot claim to be an authority in history, but positively or negatively history, I fully believe, would support the thesis that, for a corruption like the Papacy, infant baptism or some other equivalent device of man is an indispensably necessary condition ; this, for the reason, *first*, that the Papacy presupposes a secularized church continuing to exist indefinitely in a secularized condition ; and *second*, that to produce such a church nothing is adequate except a secularizing force supplied from within itself and working within itself—a force, in short, like infant baptism.

If such be indeed the teaching of history, then it

is no wonder that reform within the church was always a foredoomed attempt. The entrance of corruption was ever by a wider door than that at which the purifying influence could find its way in. Nor, if the argument of this chapter be good, is it longer matter of just surprise that the Baptist churches should have been characterized, everywhere and always, by such general soundness of doctrine. Thoughtful Pedobaptist observers have been puzzled to account for the orthodoxy which Baptist churches have with such uniformity maintained and maintained in the absence of authoritative councils and even of authoritative standards of faith. The simple principle of obedience to Christ is the clew to the secret; that principle in application to baptism alone tends to exclude the most dangerous force for corruption that ever can threaten the life or the doctrine of a church. The exclusion is, of course, not perfect, but the tendency to exclude is, for Baptist churches, firmly fixed in the very law of their growth. Infant baptism, on the contrary, introduces into the very law of that church's growth which adopts it a force for degeneration. In the case of Pedobaptist churches having an exceptionally favorable environment, especially—if I may deprecate the charge of assumption and frankly say the truth as I hold the truth to exist—especially in the case of Pedobaptist churches that feel the presence of a living and aggressive Baptist example and propagandism, the mischiefs of their mischievous principle are to a degree avoided.

But the tendency inheres in the principle itself, and cannot be separated from it. We Christians are not out of the suck of the whirlpool of Rome until we adopt in the matter of baptism the principle of simple, straightforward obedience to Christ.

Remember, it was necessary, in order to the full development of the Papacy as that development took place in actual history, that the church should be numerically coincident and commensurate with civil society ; in other words, that every member of society where the church existed, should be also a member of the church. This state of things at least must have established itself to such an extent that the exceptions should be practically insignificant. But evidently there was no practicable way to this result—no way practicable, and at the same time permanently efficacious—except to introduce every new-born member of civil society into membership with the church during the period of his infancy. The component members of civil society have no option to be members or not of civil society ; the moment they are born into the air they breathe, that moment they are born into membership of society. The church at length became as exacting as civil society ; she left no option to the individual. By infant baptism she made every new-born child a member of her communion and so a subject of her discipline. The child was born into the world and into the church at almost the selfsame moment. Birth into the church was accomplished in infant baptism ; once baptized, the child was

thenceforth helplessly a member of the church. It was not necessary that the baptism should be by proper sacerdotal hands. Baptism by whatsoever hand, in whatsoever mode, performed with the intent to baptize and if with water enough applied in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost to trickle on the unconscious infant's face or brow, was baptism, accepted as valid for the purposes of the Roman Catholic Church. The baptized child was forever after a child of the Catholic mother and entitled to her care even to the extent, if he needed it, of the offices of the Holy Inquisition. Rome makes no pretension to authority over the unbaptized ; but over the baptized, wherever they are found, she holds her right of dominion and discipline. So close is the dependence of the Papacy upon infant baptism for its existence and its power.

In view of Scripture, and in view of history no less, the duty of Baptists is plain. For the sake of themselves and their children ; for the sake of Pedobaptists and their children ; for the sake of all men now and henceforth ; above all, for the sake of Christ—let them stand fast and be strong in the name of the Lord !

CHAPTER XXII

SCRIPTURAL INFANT BAPTISM

BAPTISTS oppose infant baptism, but they practise infant baptism. Baptists do not, however, practise the infant baptism which they oppose. There is a practice of infant baptism which Baptists hold to be unscriptural; this practice is the one now common among their Pedobaptist brethren. They oppose such a practice. But there is a certain different practice of infant baptism which Baptists hold to be in the highest degree scriptural; this practice they uphold and adopt. In fact, so intensely Pedobaptist in theory are Baptists, according to their understanding of what scriptural Pedobaptism is, that if their theory were consistently carried out, there would never be any baptisms but baptisms of infants. In this sense, therefore, Baptists may justly claim to be Pedobaptists of the Pedobaptists.

I speak in a parable, my readers will think; I hasten to make my parable plain. In one word, then, this is my meaning: Whereas Pedobaptists, so called, baptize those who are infant in the natural sense of that term, Baptists, so called, baptize those who are infant in the spiritual sense of that term.

Pedobaptists baptize persons soon after their birth from the womb ; Baptists baptize persons soon after their birth from above. Pedobaptists, therefore, are we all, both they and we alike ; only they reckon by the flesh, while we reckon by the spirit.

It is curious that our Pedobaptist brethren do not see that the typical meaning of circumcision—if, indeed, circumcision has any typical meaning applicable here—is wholly in favor of Baptist Pedobaptism, and not of Pedobaptist.

I am far from maintaining that circumcision is a true type of baptism. There would be found wanting perhaps on close examination some of the essential characteristics of a true scriptural type. But, granted that the correspondence between circumcision and baptism is sufficient to warrant a rhetorical use of it for purposes of illustration in the discussion of the present subject, it will be plain on a little reflection that the analogy, such as it is, lends itself for these purposes much more naturally to the service of the Baptist than of the standard Pedobaptist view.

For consider the facts in the case. Ancient Israel was a type of the Christian church—a *type*, let it be remarked ; for ancient Israel *was* not the Christian church. It was the Christian church's type. It contained, indeed, the Christian church in part, as that church may, by an allowable prolepsis in language, be said to have existed before the Christian era. But they were not all Israel which were

of Israel—that is to say, the Jewish nation was not commensurate and coincident with the true Jewish church, the truly believing Jews. The nation was not the church, though it contained the church. The Jewish nation, notwithstanding, was the *type* of the Christian church.

Now, of what persons was the Jewish nation composed? Of descendants of the patriarch Abraham. Abraham's natural posterity—natural in a sense, though supernaturally initiated in Isaac, the child of promise—Abraham's natural posterity, I say, through all their descending generations, constituted the Jewish nation. Of the Jewish nationality thus created, circumcision was appointed to be the outward distinguishing mark. The mark of circumcision was regularly affixed during the infancy of its subjects. Those subjects were thus formally and visibly designated as members of the Jewish nation.

So far on the side of the shadow or type. Now, what is to be affirmed, the transition being made to the side of the antitype or substance? If circumcision is the analogue of baptism, what relation shall baptism be declared to hold to membership in the Christian church, that true antitype to the type which the Jewish nation is treated in Scripture as being? Why, manifestly the analogical relation, and no other. What is that analogical relation? To this question there can be but one answer. As circumcision marks offspring in the natural line of descent, so baptism marks offspring in the spiritual

line of descent. If the natural children of Abraham were circumcised soon after their birth in the flesh, Abraham's spiritual children are to be baptized in like relation of sequence and nearness to their birth in the Spirit. To baptize natural offspring simply because they are natural offspring on the ground that circumcision was thus applied, is to make baptism no longer the analogue of circumcision but the substitute for it. The church ceases thus to be parallel to the Jewish nation as antitype to type. The two, remaining no longer separate though like, become identical, instead of being analogous in mode of derivation and persistence. The Christian church, by logical consistency, so reduced from being the antitype of the Jewish nation, might more truly be described as successor to it and continuer of it. The Christian church in this way is changed from a spiritual into a natural community. This is what logic, on the current Pedobaptist theory, would make of the Christian church. The Roman Catholic body and the various State establishments of religion in Europe may serve to show how faithfully logic has been illustrated by history. That topic, however, namely, the historical aspect of infant baptism as practised by Pedobaptists, so called, I here dismiss with this simple allusion. It is a large and serious topic, well deserving to be adequately treated. I have already, the reader will remark, devoted to it a separate chapter.

Under the typical polity of the Jewish nation,

the child could not, of course, be circumcised until he was born. He was born a member of the nation, and then was circumcised as such. If circumcision was to the Jewish nation what baptism was to be to the Christian church, it follows of necessity that the subject of baptism must be born before baptism of the subject is possible. But what natural birth was to the Jewish nation, that spiritual birth is to the Christian church. As circumcision could not be performed until after natural birth, so baptism, by necessity of the analogy, cannot be performed until after spiritual birth. To perform it before is, rightly regarded, a ludicrous anachronism; more strictly still and more seriously, it is a simple and absolute nullity. The person has been born, to be sure, but the Christian has not; and it is the Christian that is to be baptized, for of Christians the church is composed. Baptism, like circumcision, initiates. Theoretically at least, and actually so far as is possible, none are to be initiated into the Christian church but true Christians. No others can be really initiated, and no others should be formally initiated, unless we are to abandon the principle of a converted church-membership and conform our churches to the Roman Catholic theory. Against this theory, the Baptist churches are, among evangelical bodies, alone in consistently protesting. Their mission of protest Baptists do not mean to abandon. They have received, they think, this trust from God. They stand for the true infant baptism—the baptism, that is to say, of

spiritual infants. The pseudo-pedobaptism—the baptism, that is to say, of natural infants, persons not yet born into the kingdom of God—they will steadfastly oppose. Scripture, reason, history, cry with one voice in their ears loudly against it. Baptists claim to be the true Pedobaptists, and they hope yet to recall their brethren all to scriptural infant baptism.

CHAPTER XXIII

WHAT "CLOSE COMMUNION" REALLY IS

RESTRICTED communion, as practised by Baptists, is not positive ; it is strictly negative. It does not turn away ; it simply does not invite. Not inviting, it naturally does not accept invitations. That is really the whole. Restricted communion does nothing more than just maintain this attitude of *not* doing. What could be less offensive ?

But restricted communion offends, nevertheless. Why ? Not for what it does, certainly, for it does nothing ; hardly for what it does not do, for what it does not do is what no one cares to have done. No one cares to invite, and no one cares to be invited—that is, for the practical purpose of accepting the invitation or of having the invitation accepted. I speak now generally. There are, of course, instances of exception—these may even be numerous ; they are, however, of no material consequence, being exceptions strictly, and not of the general rule. The general rule is that no one not Baptist wishes to invite Baptists, and no one not Baptist wishes to be invited by Baptists. Restricted communion, therefore, disappoints no one's wish. It merely does not do—what ? Why, something that

no one wants to have done. Restricted communion, accordingly, does not offend by what it is in itself. And yet it offends. Why? I ask again. If not by what it is, then how does it offend?

I answer, By its reasons for being what it is. Let restricted communion but give up its reasons, it may retain its practices and nobody will complain. If you only will invite, so our Pedobaptist brethren seem to say, if you only will invite, you need not. It is because you will not that we want you to. Just say we are welcome, and we shall be satisfied. We do not care to come; that is not it at all. But we should like to have you say "Come." Nay, you need not even say "Come," if you will but agree that you have no conscientious reasons for not saying "Come." We are reasonable. All we ask is that you think we are right. You need not act upon your thought. Just have the thought; we want nothing more.

Something such, I say, is the language of many Pedobaptists toward Baptists. Of course, the language does not take this simple form. But reduce the language often heard from Pedobaptists to its lowest terms, and this is it. Our Pedobaptist friends care nothing for the privilege of coming to our communion table; they care nothing for our company at theirs. If all was free on both sides, there would practically be very little intercommunion. They care nothing for the fact, but they care much for the sentiment. But it happens to be precisely the sentiment that we care for too; the fact

is as little to us as it is to our Pedobaptist brethren. But, on the other hand, the sentiment is as much ; we could change the fact but the sentiment would abide, and, the sentiment abiding, the changed fact would not serve any purpose. We keep the fact because we keep the sentiment ; the two go together. The fact is the sign ; the sentiment is what the fact signifies. Without its signification, the fact is nothing. What is the fact, and what is the signification ? The fact, in a word, is "restricted communion" ; and restricted communion, remember, is the usage of not inviting unbaptized persons to the Lord's Supper and of not accepting the invitation of unbaptized persons to the Supper. Such is the fact ; and the signification of the fact is simply this : We think the will of the Lord to be that all believers should be baptized, and that only when baptized should they come to the Lord's Table. If we could give up thinking as we do on this point, we could, of course, very easily give up acting as we do. Our conduct is simply true to our conviction ; that is all. If we should change our conduct, then our conduct would cease to represent our conviction. We should act the lie and not the truth.

Now conceive our conduct changed with no corresponding change of conviction. We practise "open communion," while we believe in restricted communion—that is to say, holding that no one ought to partake without having first been baptized, we still invite you, our unbaptized brethren in

Christ, to a seat at our table. We invite you, but at the same time, true to our conviction, we say to you: "You do wrong in not being baptized before you partake. Nevertheless, come, unbaptized as you are; we make you welcome. Though we warn you you do wrong, never mind what we say in warning; hear only what we say in inviting. Come, brethren, come! You ought not to, but come sit with us at the Lord's Table." I ask, Would there be any gain to Christian comity if we should practise "open communion" on these terms? Would it be more agreeable to our Pedobaptist brethren to be thus invited and warned in one and the same breath than it is not to be invited at all?

Or suppose a converse case. We are now ourselves politely invited to sit at the Lord's Table with our unbaptized brethren. We accept the invitation, at the same time delivering our souls by assuring our inviters that they do wrong in not being baptized before they partake. We come; for our consciences, we inform them, so far as our own participation is concerned, are quite satisfactorily clear in the matter; but, lest our coming at their invitation should be misconstrued by them to their harm or to the harm of the truth, we carefully purge ourselves in coming, by advising our inviters that they, on their part, have no right to press their way to the table save through the Lord's, by them yet unopened, door of baptism. Pray, tell me, would our courtesy in accepting the invitation so far over-compensate our fidelity in warning our

brethren while we accept it to go and be baptized before they come to the table themselves, that there would be on the whole a decided access of mutual good feeling in consequence? Would "open communion" on such terms as these be a change worth the while?

Or now suppose yet again that we give and take invitations to intercommunion not stating our convictions in word, but still holding them the same. Would mutual fellowship be greatly enhanced? That is to say, if our acts were perfectly well-known not to represent our silent convictions, would our acts ostensibly signifying an agreement against which our thoughts all the while were busy protesting—would these acts, I inquire, be accepted as a valuable contribution to interdenominational comity and love? Would not rather our Pedobaptist brethren justly assure us that as long as our hearts and our consciences were not in our acts of apparent hospitality, those acts were to them worth nothing in the world? I seem to hear them saying with one voice, "Act as you feel, dear brethren. Acts on your part contrary to your convictions and feelings, are to us no acceptable sacrifice. We do not care for your acts; or rather your *sentiments* are the acts of yours for which alone we do care. Change your sentiments; but till you do, keep acting in accordance with your sentiments. Admit that we are right; that is what we ask. As long as you refuse to do this, it is no matter to us just *how* you insist on reminding us that we are wrong."

And after all is there conceivable any less offensive way than the way of restricted communion in which we can keep testifying to our Pedobaptist brethren our immovable conviction that in a grave matter of obedience to our Lord, both theirs and ours, they are sadly—we will not say willfully, but strangely and mischievously—wrong?

Yet once more: let all, Baptists and Pedobaptists alike, bear distinctly in mind just what it is wherein restricted communion consists. Restricted communion for Baptists consists in their practice of not on the one hand inviting unbaptized persons to sit with them at the Lord's Table, and of not on the other accepting invitations from such to sit at the Lord's Table with them. This is the whole sum of the matter. Restricted communion in itself is simply an attitude of suspense, an act of abstaining. As a sign it signifies a certain most definite conviction—a conviction profound and abiding, and a conviction moreover such that it will not submit to be silent. Given the conviction, I ask again, and given the conviction such, is there any way less objectionable, while equally effective, of making it known—any way less objectionable than for Baptists to adopt and consistently to follow the very course which as matter of fact they might find marked out for them by the past and the present consenting example of all Christendom besides? For, in conclusion, it may fairly be added that Baptist "close communion," so miscalled, is exactly the same in principle—in so far, at least, as

baptism is concerned—with the practice generally, if not universally, observed by our Pedobaptist brethren themselves. We are neither closer nor more open, neither narrower nor more broad, in our terms of communion than are they. We require baptism before the Lord's Supper; they do the same. They admit that to be baptism which seems to us to be no baptism at all; therein lies the real difference between Baptists and Pedobaptists. We separate, they and we, not at the Lord's Supper, but at baptism. Our baptism, no doubt, is "closer" than theirs, but it is not closer, we think, than our Lord's. As for our communion, that is restricted upon precisely the same principle as is their own.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONSTRUCTIVE BAPTISM AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNION

A RITE ordained becomes an ordinance. To observe an ordinance truly is not ritualism, but obedience. I speak, of course, in the sphere of positive Christianity, where the ordaining will is Christ's and not man's. Ritualism talks of rites; obedience talks of ordinances. It is not Baptist vernacular to call baptism a rite; the true idiom speaks of it as an ordinance. Baptists do not ritualize; they obey.

It is the essence of ritualism to regard the rite as a means operative by a virtue inherent in itself; it is the essence of obedience to consider the ordinance as a condition merely, imperative because appointed. The ritualist is nice and careful lest somehow unawares he impair the spell which his rite is to him; the obedient man is scrupulous, lest he fail somewhere in meeting the exact will of his Master. The ritualist is superstitious in awe of his rite; the obedient man is loyal in awe and in love of his Lord.

Exactness therefore is by no means of necessity a note of ritualism; it may quite as naturally be a mark of the purely obedient spirit. Now,

when a rite is ordained—that is to say, when a defined external observance is prescribed—there is inevitably implied in obedience something more than the spirit to obey ; a literal act is commanded. Obedience accordingly means the performance of that act, and not merely the spirit to perform it. There is no room here for talking of the difference between the spirit and the letter. At such a point as this, provided only the act be clearly determinable in nature and possible to performance—at such a point, I say, letter and spirit become one. The spirit to obey would seem certain to issue in obedience ; but the spirit to obey is not obedience. When a physical act is commanded, the physical then is an indispensable means of helping the spiritual to obey. To believe otherwise is not so much to fly from ritualism as it is to fly toward rationalism. To be sure, the Sabbath was made for man ; but then, after all, even so it remains that something was made for man. The question is What ?

In the present case, however, the ordinance is a very simple imperative contained in two English words representing a single word in Greek : “ Be baptized.” What the imperative means need not concern us now, but manifestly it means something. Suppose for the moment that it merely means in the largest, vaguest way, “ Have water applied to your person in token of discipleship.” Still, even with so much latitude of interpretation, the imperative persists at least in meaning that. It may be deprived of its true meaning by so wide an inclu-

sion, but surely it is not stripped of all meaning. It continues to address those who are to be baptized in the second person, and it bids them do something—bids *them* do something.

Only those who are bidden can obey. Now, certainly the great mass of Christians composing the Pedobaptist communities of Christendom have never, in the plain, unsophisticated sense of obedience, obeyed the command, "Be baptized." The command, observe, is to each person: "Be baptized." No matter, I say again, at this moment exactly what the command imports. It imports at all events an act which, in the very nature of the case and from the very meaning of human language, no one can possibly perform save solely the person addressed—that is, the person to be baptized.

There is so much prepossession here that we are constantly in danger of confounding things that differ. This may excuse, if it does not even make necessary, a little insistence by way of repetition. Let us remember, then, that we are not disputing now about quantity of water for baptism, more or less; we are not discussing modes of applying water in baptism, this or those. It is not even a question as to what persons, how qualified, may properly be baptized. The point is simply and solely whether a certain command, on *any* understanding whatever of the command, is truly obeyed. We suppose, for the time, that there is no difference of opinion concerning the nature of the command.

The words "Be baptized" mean, we will say, the same thing, and no matter what, to both Baptist and Pedobaptist. They are certainly a command, whatever they mean. The question, therefore, is not, "Have I been baptized?" but, "Have I obeyed the command?" Obedience consists, not in having been baptized, but in having obeyed the command. Not to be baptized, but to obey, is the important thing. The ritualizer is thus found in him who contents himself with the act, but neglects the obedience. If Baptist or Pedobaptist, either of them, ritualizes, it certainly is not the Baptist.

Now, the actual state of the facts in the Christian world is this: The vast majority of Christian professors outside the Baptist churches have never, even according to the most latitudinarian notions of what baptism is, save in their unconscious infancy, been baptized. Nearly every candid Pedobaptist, therefore, if asked, "Have you obeyed the command, 'Be baptized'?" would be obliged to put a sense not entirely simple and natural upon the word "obey" in order to answer "Yes." To the question, "Have you been baptized?" such a person might, perhaps,—indeed he probably would,—say "Yes?" without hesitation. The answer would simply require an exercise of faith on his part. To say "Yes" to the question, "Have you obeyed the command, 'Be baptized'?" would require something more than an exercise of faith; it would require also an exercise of imagination, or at least an effort of reason. He would have to

say, "I have been told, and I believe, that I was baptized when a babe ; and I now voluntarily and freely adopt my then unconscious submission as my present deliberate act. I have, therefore, obeyed the command." He would evidently thus acknowledge that to the ordinance, "Be baptized," he had rendered, if any obedience at all, then a purely *constructive* obedience. For the command is not the solecism "Have been baptized" ; it is the plain, reasonable, and practicable "Be baptized"—a command perpetually binding till it be obeyed.

To the Baptist, therefore, his Pedobaptist brethren cannot but appear as non-obedient in the matter of this ordinance of their Lord. Even upon their own theory of baptism, their obedience is at least only a *constructive* obedience. Their baptism, accordingly, however perfect in fact and in form, is in essence and in spirit only a constructive baptism.

Constructive obedience, in such a case, is no obedience at all to the Baptist ; and constructive baptism is no baptism at all to him. So little is the Baptist a ritualizer that the fact of the rite observed is as nothing in his sight compared with the spirit of obedience in the observance. He is utterly at a loss to understand how Pedobaptists can satisfy themselves with what even to them is merely a constructive obedience. He recognizes the fact however that they so satisfy themselves, and he cheerfully admits that they act conscientiously. He is therefore free, and he is glad, to enter into spiritual communion with them as Christians. This

he does habitually and without reserve. He merely abstains from a particular symbol of communion, and he does so in what he believes to be a sentiment of paramount loyalty to his Lord.

Since Pedobaptists thus accept from themselves the spirit of obedience without the fact of obedience in relation to baptism, might they not likewise accept from us the spirit of communion without the fact of communion in relation to the Lord's Supper? In perfect good faith and in godly sincerity, I desire to ask Pedobaptists: Is not this which in venial accommodation of phrase we may call our constructive communion a full fair response to what in strict propriety of language must be called your constructive baptism?

CHAPTER XXV

“CLOSE COMMUNION” AS A METHOD OF PROPAGANDISM

THE continued—perhaps increasing—sensitivity of the Pedobaptist communities respecting the seclusive attitude assumed by most American Baptist churches in their observance of the Lord's Supper, becomes to those Baptist churches a constantly strengthening reason for persisting courageously and hopefully in their now well-established practice of “close communion,” so called. This is not because the average Baptist is less alive than the average Christian in general to the pleasure of being on excellent reciprocal terms of companionship with his fellows. The earnest Baptist sectary possesses as much as his neighbor, Pedobaptist or worldling, of that amiable disposition, sometimes a virtue and sometimes a vice, which perpetually inclines us all to enjoy being complaisant and agreeable to our friends and acquaintances. But, mistakenly or otherwise, the strenuous American Baptist has conscientiously made up his mind that Providence has committed to his hands a custody and a championship of an important imperiled ordinance of his Lord. To maintain a conspicuous, incessant, organic testi-

mony on behalf of this ordinance, is to the American Baptist who is Baptist by conviction, and not merely by prescription, a leading reason of existence for his church as individual member of a distinct denominational body.

It is the practical problem proposed by Providence to the Baptist churches of America in what way most effectively, and at the same time least offensively, they may articulate their testimony to the integrity and purity of the ordinance of baptism—with respect to its own unalterable nature, indeed, but much more with respect to its subjects—and preserve the ordinance as they vividly believe that it was once delivered to the saints by the Lord himself and after him by his inspired apostles.

Such being their problem, as the Baptist churches of the land long ago felt compelled to accept it at the hands of their Lord (for, whether they were beside themselves, it was to God), two solutions were open to their choice. They might either limit themselves to the iteration of their testimony by simple word of mouth, or they might adopt a less importunate method in some form of significant silence. If they should elect the oral method, they must labor under two very serious disadvantages. In the first place, they must insist in their public instructions upon the sole article of baptism to an extent far out of proportion to its true place and importance in a vast and harmonious system of scriptural truth and obedience. The effect would inevitably be to breed fanaticism or—almost as bad

—to induce utter moral sterility in both speaker and hearer. In the second place, a further obvious disadvantage of the oral method would be that the testimony so rendered would take effect only where it was not needed, and where, in such disproportionate excess, it would be positively hurtful; for, of course, Pedobaptists would not feel called to come and subject themselves as hearers to preaching like this. The effect of the oral method would thus be null where alone it was needed, while where alone it was felt it would be injurious. The sole alternative remaining to American Baptists was to withhold their testimony altogether, or else to adopt some means of testifying in silence.

For reasons that appear very cogent—indeed, quite imperative—to American Baptists, they dared not withhold their testimony altogether. They cast therefore about them for some habitual act that should at once and for all incorporate their testimony in a living and impressive sign, and should thus release their tongues for the more fruitful preaching of the manifold obedience of Christ. (I give here not the history, but the rationale, of “close communion.” As matter of fact, “close communion” among American Baptists is inherited from Great Britain.) The almost universally conceded relationship of priority between baptism and the Lord’s Supper suggested to American Baptists an obvious and unmistakable means of embodying their testimony in an appropriate visible sign. With insignificant exceptions, the churches of Christen-

dom all agreed in requiring baptism according to their ideas of baptism as the invariable antecedent of the Lord's Supper. Baptists, in like just consistency with their own views of what baptism is both as to its nature and especially as to its subjects, had only to do *precisely the same thing* with all Christendom besides, and already their duty of testimony was accomplished at a stroke and was also set in constant course of accomplishment. An occasional utterance to interpret and vindicate their conduct to themselves and to their brethren, and they might otherwise join heart and hand with all that loved their Lord together with themselves in every act of a common obedience to his will. It seemed absolutely the most loyal and the least obtrusive method conceivable of fulfilling the mission which they solemnly believed that they, as a denomination of Christians, had received from their Master. They could not do less; they need not do more.

Let generous Pedobaptists be sure that their Baptist brethren are deeply, immovably in earnest about this. Baptists do intensely believe that their Pedobaptist brethren are wrong here, and, being here wrong, are wrong at a point that is incalculably important, if it be not even absolutely essential, to the life of the kingdom of Christ among men. This Baptists believe, and they cannot believe otherwise. Is it anything more than a fair tolerance of different belief for Pedobaptists to allow Baptists to publish their convictions; to pub-

lish them by a negative act of simply abstaining ; to publish them in a way that infringes no fellow-Christian's liberty, but merely imposes instead a check upon their own strong natural impulses to self-indulging sentimental good-fellowship—is so much concession as this of freedom to Baptists anything more, I ask, than a just measure of humane comity, of Christian charity ? Baptists certainly think as they do think about Pedobaptists, but they would love Pedobaptists none the less for being magnanimously permitted to express their thoughts about them. What is called “close communion” in one important view of the subject is simply an organized method of propagandism for beliefs and practices that Baptists will assuredly never give up and that, for the sake of their brethren, of the world, and of Christ, they are very unwilling to hold to alone. They are sorry that their testimony is unwelcome to any, but they are thankfully glad that at least it makes its impression. They join with heart in the prayer of many for the advent of that day when there shall be “one flock, one Shepherd.”

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SENTIMENTAL VIEW OF COMMUNION

BREACHES of customary ecclesiastical usage with respect to the observance of the Lord's Supper occur now and again that plainly show how needful at frequent intervals is a little wholesome self-recollection on the part of most evangelical churches as to the true idea and use of the ordinance. Besides the Romanist, the Lutheran, and the modified Zwinglian or modern Sacramentarian theory of the Eucharist, still another theory may be distinguished: there is likewise the sentimental theory. This sentimental theory may exist independently by itself; but it is more likely to exist in connection with one or another of the different theories first mentioned, imparting then to that theory a certain quality of its own.

Circumstances sometimes conspire to create a case of no little difficulty for susceptible temperaments. A Christian woman lies dying; she strongly desires to partake of the Lord's Supper. She is herself a believer duly baptized; friends and kindred present however, though professed believers, have never obeyed Christ in baptism. Shall the minister provide a celebration of the Lord's Supper in such a case, and admit these unbaptized commu-

nicants? To refuse might seem unfeeling. A case of the sort some years ago occurred, and the minister recites the case very touchingly. It was not wonderful that a man of genial sensibilities should be moved as this minister was. The exaltation of feeling to which he testifies as experienced in common by all the participants of the act, was entirely natural. No doubt it was real, and no doubt it was honest. I should be the last to make light of a scene so sanctified by the most beautiful and the tenderest affections of the human heart. The mere fact that the chief incident of the occasion was a mistake—a serious mistake even, considering the serious sequel of the principles involved—this fact does not make the occasion a fit subject for jest or for very severe reprobation. The high-wrought emotions of that select and solemn hour were doubtless genuine; they may too have had some substantial effect of edification on the participants.

But to concede so much is by no means to concede that the act itself was a proper one. The sweet transfigured sentiment was no illusion; but the notion that this sentiment depended on the particular act of communion in bread and wine as its condition—such a notion, by whomsoever entertained, is I believe an illusion.

I should not need to be a Baptist to say this. But this minister was a Baptist. He was a liberal Baptist, but he did not believe in the baptism of infants. Let me propose a question. Suppose that

dying Christian woman had been the mother of an infant child ; suppose that early education and long prepossession had reasserted their power at that supreme moment over her mind and her conscience, and that, though now herself a Baptist by profession, she had earnestly wished to see her little one consecrated to a covenant-keeping God in the rite of baptism ; suppose, once more, that our Baptist minister had yielded to this pathetic wish of the dying mother, and had consented to sprinkle the precious drops of that sparkling chrism on the unconscious forehead of the child, while those true friends and lovers of the woman stood around to witness and to weep ? Now, does any one doubt that this hypothetical occasion would have been marked by the same access of beautiful emotion on the part of the company as made the real occasion so touching and so memorable to them all ? But a true minister would not allow himself to be thus convinced that God had thereby set his seal to the rite of infant baptism as truly of his appointment. He would not accept his own sympathetic emotions as the unmistakable voucher of the Divine approval of his part in the act. He would easily perceive in such a case that there was a completely satisfactory way of accounting for his exceptional inward experiences, his own and his companions', without resort to the supposition of a supernatural cause. It was sympathy, purely human sympathy, rendered some degrees more deep and more solemn by the consciousness of all that one at least of their

number associated their act, however mistakenly, with the idea of obedience to Christ in a positive or external ordinance of his. In other words, the origin of the emotion in the case supposed would be purely sentimental. And such I believe to have been the origin of the emotion in the case which actually occurred. The minister acted unconsciously on the sentimental theory of the Lord's Supper.

He made a mistake, for the sentimental view of the Lord's Supper is radically wrong. It quite changes the relative place of Christ and the believer. It is Ptolemaic, and not Copernican: it unawares puts the believer instead of Christ in the center of the system. It subjects Christ's ordinance to the Christian, instead of subjecting the Christian to the ordinance of Christ. Now, in a certain sense, the sun was made for the earth, but the sun can be more useful to the earth when the earth moves and the sun stands still. And so the ordinances of Christ were in a certain sense made for the Christian, but the Christian is always better served by the ordinances when he is himself in the attitude of a servant to them. This is especially true of the positive or external ordinances of Christ. That a distinguishing grace is given to the believer in connection with these ordinances, I fully believe; but this distinguishing grace is given, not to the act, but to the obedience in the act. The ordinance is not a sort of sacred spell to conjure with; it is not a secret entrusted to the believer by which

he may at will command, as if by a certain art of holy legerdemain, the peculiar grace divinely pronounced upon the ordinance. It is an *ordinance*—that is, a command. Like other commands, it is to be obeyed ; but, unlike the moral commands, it is in its nature not susceptible of habitual—that is, incessant—obedience. It can only be obeyed occasionally. The occasions of obedience are to be determined by New Testament precedents and by the evident nature of the ordinance itself. To create occasions in self-indulgent compliance with our own capricious humors of religious feeling, is to subject the ordinance to ourselves instead of subjecting ourselves to the ordinance ; it is to seek the grace through the act, and not through the obedience in the act. This principle, once admitted, would render it equally proper to celebrate the Lord's Supper upon occasions so frequent that it would be impossible to name or to number them. The obvious tendency would be toward a curious sort of sentimental ritualism that might easily grow into a burden of observance, of will-worship, too grievous to be borne.

A church might meet, at least by representatives of its number, in the room of a member drawing near to death, and there celebrate with him the Lord's Supper. Such a meeting not unfrequently is held for prayer or praise. But there must be no idea on the part of any, that this celebration has a magical virtue in it. If some trace of such a false idea be observable in the mind of the dying person,

then I would have the pastor first remove this, and not enter upon the observance of the rite until it was made perfectly clear to all that the Lord's Supper is in no wise efficacious or more appropriate than, for instance, a commendatory prayer or a conveying hymn as a preparation for death. The danger—a vital one—to be guarded against, is that the dying person will look upon the Supper as a kind of viaticum for the parting soul on its last journey. There is superstition in the sentiment to be scrupulously exorcised. But, at all events, such an occasion should not be admitted to dispense any other participant, more than it dispensed the dying man himself, from the obligation, which almost all denominations agree to recognize as universally binding, to have been previously *baptized*.

At all times, and never more heedfully than at the dying moment of the believer, it is the Christian pastor's obvious duty to remove every other prop from the disciple's faith, and let him lean and sink, however far, until he rests and is strong leaning full on the arm of his Beloved. It may be kind, but it is not wisely kind, to let anything, then at least, come between the believer and his Lord. There is something still better than an ordinance of Christ: it is CHRIST.

CHAPTER XXVII

BAPTIST VERNACULAR

EVERY separate set of distinctive fundamental ideas, in whatever sphere of thought, tends to appropriate for itself a certain distinguishable mode of expression, which may be called its dialect or vernacular. This is true in morals, in social science, in politics, in philosophy, in literature, and it is no less true in religion. There is a contrasted and recognizable use of language natural and normal to each one of all the existing sects or denominations of Christians. It is in this sense of the phrase that I write in the heading to the present chapter, "Baptist Vernacular." I mean by it that well-defined selection and adaptation of words by which the thoroughbred and well-instructed Baptist expresses the ideas peculiar to his school of religious opinion.

This, like every other established vernacular, possesses an idiom and an accent which are very sensitive and very exacting. It is exceedingly easy for a man who was not born to it or who has not been bred in it—who, in fact, does not speak it as his mother-tongue—to make a foreigner's mistake in attempting to use it. I wish to point out one such slip in Baptist vernacular that I have observed

during recent newspaper controversy on the subject of "close communion," so called. Of course, I refer to a choice of phraseology exemplified in writers assuming to express themselves as regular Baptists. I raise no question as to the absolute sincerity and candor of the writers alluded to ; I do not wish to mention any writer by name. Indeed, the discussion may better be quite impersonal and anonymous. I purposely imply by using the word "slip" here that the deviation from just Baptist idiom under present remark is unintentional, and even unwitting, on the part of such as have made it.

It is not pure Baptist vernacular to discuss matters of religious usage as questions of individual right appertaining or not to the Christian. I do not now say that the Christian has no "rights" in the sense, whatever the sense may be, in which that word is thus employed in religious discussion. But it is not good Baptist vernacular so to employ the word ; the word assumes the wrong point of view ; it is not just to the true controlling Baptist idea. The true controlling Baptist idea is duty, not right. The proper point of view puts the Lord, and not the disciple, in the center. Baptists, in so far as they are ideal—that is, consistent—Baptists, occupy themselves, not with claiming or with conceding individual rights, but with obeying their Lord. It betrays the unconscious presence and influence of different controlling ideas—ideas not Baptist, nay, anti-Baptist—when a man talks of individual rights in discussing points of religious observance.

Besides this, to use the word "right" as it is sometimes thus used by persons assuming to speak in the character of Baptists, is yet otherwise a slip in Baptist vernacular. True Baptist vernacular is at least intelligible and clear; but the word "right" thus used is hopelessly vague and ambiguous. "Right" is a relative word. When you say, for example, that the believer has a "right" to sit at the Lord's Table, what do you mean? You mean that he has a "just claim" to do so. If I have a just claim, it must be a claim upon some one. But "claim" here upon whom? "Claim" upon Christ? If so, it is then Christ's duty to provide for the believer a seat at his table. What makes it such? Some voluntary engagement, it must be, undertaken by Christ. Where has Christ undertaken any engagement of this sort? Impliedly, it may be said, in the command, "Do this in remembrance of me." Granted. But to whom was this command addressed? We must answer this question before we can decide with whom, if with any, Christ has engaged himself to provide for them a seat at his table. It was addressed to men who had believed. True. But also to men who had been baptized.

It is no assumption to say that Christ's apostles had been baptized, any more than it is to say that they believed in Christ—indeed, not so much. True, it is inconceivable that they did not all believe, or profess to believe, in him; they would not have been present otherwise. But no more would

they have been present if they had not been baptized. Christ himself, to make his own example perfect, had submitted to baptism. He afterward baptized either with his own hands or by the hands of his disciples, and he most solemnly enjoined baptism as the very first duty of discipleship. Is it possible to thought that Jesus, having first scrupulously been baptized himself, should then have had baptism administered to others by those who themselves had never been baptized? Granted it is nowhere expressly said that every one of the apostles was baptized. Neither is it anywhere expressly said that every one of the apostles believed. Indeed Judas, we know, did not, in the true sense of belief; although he no doubt had been baptized, for baptism was the invariable profession and badge of discipleship. If, then, the application of the command, "Do this in remembrance of me"—in other words the ordinance [command] of the Lord's Supper—is not limited in its original intention by the qualification, in participants, of baptism, so neither is it limited by the qualification in them of faith. In fact, no qualification whatever, then, can be named that should limit it. It is, in that case, indiscriminately and universally binding on all men everywhere, without reference to their character or their conduct. This would be "open communion" in its only true logical comprehension.

But perhaps the word "right" in the formula that the "believer has a right" to a seat at the Lord's Table means "just claim," not upon Christ,

but upon fellow-believers. I then as a believer, in that character simply, have a "just claim" upon my fellow-believers to enjoy, under their provision and at their expense, a seat with them at the table of the Lord. Does this notion, thus frankly stated, need any discussion? Would not an admiration-point after it be enough? Surely, if it is my fellow-believers' duty to provide for me a seat at the Lord's Table, it must have been made their duty by some ordinance to that effect created by Christ. Where is there such an ordinance? It does not exist in any form, express or implicit. It could not by any possibility exist in a book like the Bible, where common sense is as omnipresent as is inspiration. If "right" is predicated only in the extremely imperfect sense of the believers' "just claim" not to be actively prevented by fellow-believers from sitting at the Lord's Table somewhere, under suitable conditions, why then nobody, in this free country at least, disputes the "believer's right" to do that, and the discussion ends exactly where it began. Baptists never question Pedobaptists' right to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in this sense of the word "*right*." Pedobaptists have, no doubt, a perfectly just claim on Baptists not to be hindered by them; and Baptists always respect the claim. Baptists have at different times been very much embarrassed themselves by others in this respect, but I never heard of others being at all embarrassed by Baptists, and I presume I never shall hear of such a thing.

If Christians would consistently restrict themselves to thinking of duty, and refuse to indulge themselves in thinking of *rights* with regard to the Lord's Supper, there would speedily come an end to controversies on the subject of "close" and "open" communion. There is just one command bearing on the point: "Do this in remembrance of me." Let us all attend to obeying: that will solve the problem at once. The commands of Christ are all of them equally binding, and equally binding upon all. In a true and in a very solemn sense the command, "Do this in remembrance of me," is binding upon every sinner as much as upon any Christian, and as much as the command, "Repent." But there is a natural order of obedience. It is obviously the intention of Christ that all who partake of the Supper shall first have repented; but quite as obviously it is Christ's intention that all who participate in the Supper shall first have been baptized. If I think I have been baptized, that does not fulfill the purpose of Christ unless my thought corresponds with the fact. My thought, however mistaken, may indeed make it my individual duty to act accordingly, and, though unbaptized, obey the ordinance of the Supper; but if your thought is different, and more just perhaps than mine, you certainly have no duty to encourage me in my mistake either by word or by deed. Nay, it is then your duty to disturb my false persuasion, or persuasion believed by you to be false, in every suitable way of moral influence.

Exactly thus Baptists do toward Pedobaptists by their much-misunderstood practice of "close communion," so called. There is no precept bidding us sit down at the Lord's Table with those whom we believe not to have been baptized; there is a precept that we should teach others to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. This we try to do, and a part of our method consists in what is commonly called "close communion." We have reason to thank God that he is pleased to make it in such a measure successful. What God has rendered our duty, let our fellow-Christians at least concede to be our "right."

There is a second mistake in dialect much like the first, but still different enough to deserve separate mention. Indeed the very likeness of it to the first requires that it be discriminated from that in order to be recognized as really another mistake and not the same. The mistake is in calling the Lord's Supper a "privilege," in contrast with baptism conceived as of a "duty." Now, strictly and scripturally speaking, what warrant have we to make such a distinction as this between baptism and the Supper? None whatever, as I fully believe. Of baptism and of the Supper, each one equally, it may be said that it is at the same time both a duty and a privilege. Let us have done distinguishing between the commands of our Lord in this invidious way. True privilege to the Christian is ever the privilege of obeying his Lord. If a Christian professor finds himself enjoying in the

Lord's Supper a pleasure different from this, he may well stop and inquire, "Is my joy genuine? Is there not some adulteration of mere sentiment in it?" What Baptist pastor is there who will not testify that there has occurred in his experience many and many a case of joy on the part of the convert in the act of being baptized, not less, certainly, than that which attended afterward the same convert's participation of bread and wine at the table of the Lord? Charles Wesley never had a truer inspiration than when he wrote,

Oh, how happy are they
Who their Saviour obey!

In truth, the joy of obedience is often greatest in triumphing over the natural choice of the heart and turning what *was* a duty into a privilege. The relation between Obedience and her Lord is a beautiful relation—beautiful and blessed. His statutes are her *song*; Obedience sings them all—not some of them, but *all* of them. Baptism is to her a privilege as much as is the Lord's Supper.

Let us take care of our dialect. Let us cease talking so much of our rights and talk more of our duties. Let us beware how we choose among the commandments, calling this a privilege, that a duty. Finally, let us pay no heed to speaking pure Baptist, and all heed to speaking pure Christian. For what is good Baptist dialect, if it be not good Christian dialect? Nothing, nothing, nothing in the world but jargon and a strife of tongues.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CLOSENESS OF "CLOSE COMMUNION"

FOR men to measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves among themselves (we have apostolic authority for it) is not wise. The folly is frequently practised however, and I am myself about to practise it here. My excuse for doing so is that I hope, in a particular instance of mutual comparison, to diminish somewhat the folly of making it by increasing the element of truth and justice with which it may henceforward be made. The comparison which I have in mind is that between American Baptists and their Pedobaptist brethren as to their respective liberality in the matter of communion.

American Baptists, when in controversy pressed with the narrowness of their denominational usage at this point, not unfrequently reply that their usage is no more narrow than is that of their sister denominations of evangelical Christians. "You Pedobaptists," they say, "restrict the privilege of communion to persons who have been baptized. We Baptists, on our part, do the same. The only difference between you and ourselves is that you Pedobaptists regard as baptized many persons whom we Baptists do not. Baptist terms of com-

munion are identical with Pedobaptist terms of communion. The Baptist definition of baptism, however, is different. If Baptists are narrow, their narrowness begins at baptism—begins there, and ends there. At the Lord's Supper, they are as broad and liberal as are any (individual exceptions being allowed for) among the vast majority of their Pedobaptist brethren."

To this representation the alert Pedobaptist replies: "Your claim is too large. It is quite true that we, as well as you, demand baptism before communion, and that hence we, with you, may be said to restrict communion to the baptized. So far our terms of communion and yours agree. But no farther. As for us, we freely extend the right and privilege of communion to all, without distinction of sectarian name, whom we consider to have been duly baptized. But you are more strict. Communicants with you must not simply have been baptized according to your exclusive notions of what baptism is; but must likewise be members in good and regular standing of some church of your own faith and order. Such at least are the terms of the invitation to communion most frequently heard, when any invitation at all is heard at the table of the Lord spread under the auspices of regular American Baptists. Now, by the restrictedness of such an invitation as this, there are whole denominations of immersed Christians excluded from communion. There is the great body of the Disciples, or Campbellites, so called. There are

the Free-Will Baptists, not to mention the smaller communities, such as the Tunkers, the Seventh-Day Baptists, the Winebrennarians, and others. Besides these numerous masses of the baptized whom you debar from communion, there are debarred also with you great numbers of immersed individuals embraced in the membership of Pedobaptist churches, since all evangelical denominations are ready to give baptism by immersion when weak consciences require it. In fine, we invite you, but you do not invite us. In simple truth, you invite nobody, for you only invite yourselves. In this comparison, what becomes of your claim that Baptists are as liberal as Pedobaptists in their terms of communion? "

I rejoin: "The comparison at best will be barren; but let us at least make it just. If the decision of the issue between you and us, as to our respective liberality in communion, were wholly dependent on the relative number of persons baptized whom we severally do not admit to the table, Baptists, notwithstanding the large discounts against them which you have now been enumerating, might still, I submit, claim judgment in their favor. Pedobaptists exclude from communion a larger number of persons whom they deem to have been duly baptized than do Baptists of the immersed. In fact, they perhaps exclude more than they admit."

You ask: "How is this?" And I say that the usage of infant baptism creates a state of things

among those who practise it in which the non-communicants baptized constantly outnumber the communicants. If count of exceptions on either side is to determine the advantage in liberality between you and us, Baptists certainly will not lose by the comparison. I admit, of course, that victory, in a count like this, is a worthless victory. I only insist that it would be equally worthless for Pedobaptists, if Pedobaptists could claim it.

Why Baptist usage should make the exceptions that it does of baptized persons not invited to the Lord's Supper, may be briefly explained. The reason of these exceptions is the same as the reason of restricted communion in general. The exceptions are naturally created by the restriction itself. The restriction itself is founded upon our undoubting inference : (1) That our Lord wishes to be obeyed in his ordinance of baptism ; (2) that only such as have obeyed him in this ordinance should deem themselves qualified to go forward and obey him in the ordinance of the Supper ; (3) that we ought all of us to exercise our influence to secure to Christ from others obedience in these points ; (4) that we should not be doing this, if we invited unbaptized—that is, in respect of baptism, non-obedient disciples to sit with us at the table, or, reciprocally, accepted invitations to sit there with them ; (5) that we should not be doing this if we, ourselves baptized, threw away our identity as baptized by joining non-baptizing bodies of Christians ; (6) that we should not be doing this if we

invited to the Supper baptized persons who themselves took such a course—all which points seem to us very clear, and very consistent, and very conclusive, so far as baptized members of Pedobaptist churches are concerned. So far as are concerned, for example, the Disciples or Campbellites, we simply feel that these bodies of Christians do not take proper precautions, in doctrine or in practice, to guard against the entrance into their number of persons not truly regenerate. And regeneration before baptism is our cardinal Baptist principle ; that at least is a particularly applicable form of our more general principle of obedience to Christ. With reference to certain of the other bodies of Christians instanced as exceptions, there would probably be difference of usage with different Baptist churches—some inviting, and some not.

We have indulged here the question as to the real comparative closeness of close communion, so called. Technically and strictly, we have found the Baptist to be less exclusive than the Pedobaptist practice ; but it is an idle, it is a worse than idle, dispute, which party, the Baptist or the Pedobaptist, is more liberal in the matter of communion. The true question is, not which is more liberal, not even which is more consistent with itself, but which is essentially more in accordance with the reason and the right of the gospel of Christ. It is a false and a mischievous diversion to be drawn aside into a wrangle for the palm of superiority in broad and easy inclusion. Is or is not the article of baptism, stand-

ing as baptism does in vital symbolic relation to the principle of an exclusive regenerate church-membership—is baptism, so related, of sufficient importance in the scheme of the gospel to become the reason of existence for a denomination of Christians? That, briefly stated, is the point really at issue in the controversy between "close" and "open" communion.

A subsidiary question remains. Is the practice of restricted communion necessary to the continued and efficient testimony of Baptists on behalf of the truth and integrity of the ordinances of Christ respecting baptism? If baptism, in that form of it in which and with that purpose of it for which Christ delivered it to his church, is of value enough to demand from age to age a group of confessors to stand for it; and if, in order to their successful standing for it, it is needful that they restrict the communion to those who on this point are like-minded with themselves, then the present practice of American Baptists is impregnably founded in the right and reason of the gospel. Otherwise, it is a mere piece of sectarian bigotry, which Baptists ought promptly to renounce and forsake. With the same breath of abjuration, they ought likewise to renounce and forsake their separate denominational existence and lose themselves undistinguished among the various sects of evangelical Christendom. In fact, open communion is for Baptists denominational suicide. The suicide may be slow, but it is none the less sure. The course of

English Baptist history illustrates this. English Baptists have generally practised open communion. This they have done deliberately, with conscious intention. Apparently without deliberation and without conscious intention, they are ceasing to be Baptists in any sense of that name which is worth the trouble of stating. When a church calling itself Baptist admits—not only to communion, but to perfect and equal membership—persons who have never been baptized, what is that but denominational suicide? Yet this is exactly what some at least of the most conspicuous among so-called Baptist churches in London notoriously do. And this too is the proper historical logic of open communion.

Restricted communion is not less necessary to the permanent separateness of Baptist churches, and therefore to their continued efficiency in standing for the integrity of the ordinance of baptism; and, what is of more consequence, in standing for the vital principle of a regenerate church-membership, not less necessary, I say—it is more necessary by far—than the mere ostensible existence of churches that are Baptist. More necessary; for, let churches retain the name only of Baptist, and cease to insist on baptism for church-membership (as, ceasing to insist on baptism for participation in the Lord's Supper, they are logically and historically certain to do); let this once happen, and where is organized testimony for the integrity of Christ's ordinances, where organized testimony for

the vital principle of regeneration before 'church-membership? Such organized testimony has disappeared from under the sun. There is nothing left—nothing in the way of church organization with an anchor fixed anywhere strong enough to hold against the enormous suck of the whirlpool that draws inward toward Rome; or against the fierce centrifugal force with which that same whirlpool flings outward toward rationalism and infidelity. It is not mere perverse whim; it is sober and, as we suppose, enlightened, at any rate very deeply infixed conviction, that makes and keeps us Baptist. We think we stand strong where we do, not in vain. There are some very remarkable indications of the practical effect produced by our attitude of protest. These lie not simply in our great comparative numerical growth; but still more in the disuse into which infant baptism is falling among American non-Baptist bodies of Christians. There are no statistics at hand to confirm or confute the opinion; but I venture to express the opinion that in England, where the attitude of Baptists is different, no such significant results in the decay of infant baptism could be exhibited as have lately been exhibited in this country. Who can doubt that the difference in this respect, which unquestionably exists, is due to the difference between the attitude of Baptists here and the attitude of Baptists there? Who can believe that the actual results observable here would have taken place just the same, had the propagandism of Baptist

views been left to the mere advocacy of argument—argument not provoked and not stimulated by a constantly visible attitude on our part, such as has in fact been maintained, of demonstration and protest in the form of restricted communion?

The even greater comparative numerical increase of Baptists in England, if such of late there has been, does not make void the conclusion drawn in favor of the American as being better than the English usage respecting communion. The disappearing of infant baptism is more significant than numerical increase of Baptists, and the presence in England of such an exceptional influence as that of Mr. Spurgeon easily accounts for recent expansion in English Baptist membership, without our attributing the gain to open communion views and practices.

Meantime, let everybody bear in mind that close communion, so misnamed, is in fact less close and less exclusive than is that practice itself which calls the opprobrious name. Pedobaptists actually withhold the Lord's Supper from persons esteemed by them baptized in greater number than do Baptists from the class corresponding. This as matter of comparison. As matter of reason and right, Baptist restricted communion is obedience to Christ; fulfillment, that is to say, of Christ's will, loyally inferred, in a case where express revelation there is none.

Comparatively then, the closeness of "close communion" is in degree not greater than the close-

ness of open communion as practised among Pedobaptists ; while, absolutely, the closeness of close "communion" is, in kind, that which seems necessary for subserving the truth of the gospel. This latter view, if it needed confirmation, might find it in the substantially agreeing usage of all evangelical Christian denominations, Pedobaptist as well as Baptist.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE AMENITIES OF "CLOSE COMMUNION"

AMENITY and close communion are terms and ideas not, I suppose, very often associated in thought ; and in fact, perhaps the things themselves are not so often as would be desirable found in happy fellowship together. This latter judgment I form from observations reported to me by others, rather than from observations that I have had occasion to make myself. It has occurred to me that possibly I might now have become qualified through circumstances to offer a contribution toward the increase of amenity in the practical application of the principle of "close communion," as the Baptist usage concerning the Lord's Supper is, with some degree of reproach intended, customarily called. Readers of the present volume will not suspect the author of laxity in adhesion to Baptist views if he now permits himself the luxury of surprising them a little with an unanticipated suavity of mode recommended in carrying out that doctrine in actual practice.

I happened not long ago to be the cause of a conversation on this general subject between a Baptist minister and a Baptist deacon, who met one Sunday afternoon at my house. This conversation

brought out in a pretty fairly satisfactory way the opinion on the point involved, which is, I believe, already quite common among Baptists, and which, for myself, I should like to see adopted and acted upon by my Baptist brethren everywhere. Perhaps I cannot do better here than become reporter of the conversation alluded to.

I caused the conversation by producing and reading a letter recently received by me, of which the following extracts present the material points. I wish I could properly name the writer; but decorum forbids. I suppress indications that might point out my correspondent's identity. Even with such suppressions the letter itself shows how worthy by character and standing the writer of it is of respectful consideration:

"DEAR SIR: I have just finished reading your article, 'The Closeness of Close Communion,' in 'The Independent' of the 15th inst., and as examples illustrate the operation of a given rule, I wish to state a case, and it shall be my own. For about fifty-five years I have been a professor of religion after the Congregational order, twenty-five years a deacon in this place, where I have practised medicine for over forty-nine years, being an A. B. and A. M. at—College and M. D. at Philadelphia, and ex-president of the State Medical Society. I mention these unimportant facts merely to show that I am known, and that without a blot.

"Some years since we lost our church by fire,

and as we were homeless, I went one afternoon to a Baptist church without knowing that it was communion Sabbath with them until I had taken a seat in a slip by myself. My first thought was, 'I will withdraw'; but conscience replied: 'What! turn your back upon the Lord's Supper?' And I concluded to remain. In due time a deacon in whose family I was or had been employed professionally, in distributing the bread passed directly by me and my slip. Was this, after 1 Peter 3:8, 'tender-hearted' or 'humble-minded,' or after the old version, 'courteous' to a stranger? And if by their works we are to know who are the friends and followers of Christ, then one is as much entitled to the dear relationship as the official who practically said: 'Stand thou by thyself, for I am holier than thou!'"

The Baptist minister either was himself really in some doubt on the point involved in the foregoing extract and wished to clear his mind, or else he thought well to go at the subject in a tentative fashion for the sake of his friend, the deacon. The deacon, on his side, either was what might by accommodation of a political slang term be styled a "stalwart" in ecclesiasticism, or else he assumed that part for the purpose of humoring the Socratic turn that the minister chose to take, and of thus giving that gentleman a chance to set forth his notions more entirely to his own satisfaction. Whichever was the true state of the case, the con-

versation proceeded Socratically and the deacon suffered the minister to manage him somewhat as he pleased. The conversation, let it be understood, is one that actually took place, and in both form and substance it was, as nearly as I can remember, what I am here about to report it.

The letter having been read :

"Well, deacon," said the minister, "did your peer, the deacon, in this case do right?"

"Yes," promptly replied the deacon, with brisk decision in his manner.

"You would do likewise under like circumstances?"

"Undoubtedly," said the deacon, as if ready to show that he had the courage of his convictions.

"You mean that, if for instance Mr. John H. Martin [the minister named here a Presbyterian of conspicuous position] was among the communicants whom you were serving, you would pass him by?"

"That is what I mean," said the deacon, braced up with the consciousness of uttering words such as make a man feel strong in speaking truth.

"But if by Mr. John H. Martin's side sat Will Brown" [the minister here named a man who, though a Baptist member, was known as intemperate and reckless of his duties to the church], "you, having passed by Mr. John H. Martin, would then offer the bread and the wine to Will Brown?"

"Well, no," said the deacon, but with the air of one not now so certain of his way; "I do not think I would offer Will Brown the bread and the wine."

The minister paused on that, to give the deacon time.

“You think you would pass Will Brown?”

“Yes, I would,” repeated the deacon, in the manner of a man that on the whole wouldn’t.

“Well, deacon,” said the minister, as if not caring to press the deacon out of measure, “on what principle would you pass John H. Martin?”

“I would pass him as one not qualified to sit at the Lord’s Supper through being not baptized.”

“Would you do this on your own individual judgment and responsibility, or on the presumed judgment and responsibility of the church whose deacon, or servant, or (pardon) waiter, you were?”

“I would do it on my own individual judgment and responsibility,” said the deacon with calmness.

“Just as on your own individual judgment and responsibility you would also pass Will Brown?”

“Exactly,” said the deacon, with the air of one unexpectedly feeling the support of a principle.

“But, deacon, it is my duty to assure you, upon my honor, that, as a matter of fact, when it came to the actual case in hand, you would not pass Will Brown. You would wish to, and in that sense you would; but then you would overwhelmingly feel the impropriety of your singling out for yourself this proposing communicant, and, on your own individual judgment and responsibility, refusing to serve him as not worthy to be served. You would say to yourself: ‘I am acting now as deacon, not as judge. My business is to serve, not to decide who

ought to be served.' Deacon, you would not pass Will Brown."

"I would not," firmly replied the deacon, as one gratified to see his own position at length clearly apprehended. "If I did, I should be administering ecclesiastical discipline in my own private capacity, which would be manifest arrogance."

"Very well, deacon. So too, in passing Mr. John H. Martin, you would not pass him as decided by yourself alone to be not a qualified communicant?"

"No, I should do it as deacon, as servant of the church, as one simply carrying out the church's view."

"The church's view, then—that is, your church's view—you take to be that, in case Mr. John H. Martin, for instance, seats himself among the communicants, you, as deacon, ought to pass him by in the distribution?"

"That is it," said the deacon.

"Well, deacon; but, practically—you are a practical man—practically, how is this view ascertained to be in fact the view of your church? Now, undoubtedly, it is the view of every Baptist church that any one proposing to partake of the Lord's Supper should first have been baptized; but then that is not the same thing as declaring it to be the view of your particular Baptist church that Mr. John H. Martin, seated at the Supper, should be passed by in the distribution of the bread and the wine. For aught you know, it may not be the

view of your particular church that you should take exactly this method of letting it be understood that Mr. John H. Martin is not in their opinion a qualified communicant. Such a view, if it exist on the part of your particular church, needs in some way to be ascertained. Has it in fact been ascertained? Has the church come to a vote on the question?"

"Never," deposed the deacon.

"Have you, on this point, taken the sense of individual persons to any considerable number among the membership?"

"I have not," honestly confessed the deacon, continuing his testimony.

"Have you ever discussed the subject before to-day?"

"Never."

"Or heard it discussed?"

"Nor heard it discussed."

"Your action then, on a real occasion arising, would be sudden and without premeditation?"

"It would; but might it not be fair to assume, in default of evidence to the contrary, that the view of my particular Baptist church is in accord with the sentiment of the Baptist denomination at large?" tentatively inquired the deacon, turning Socratic, he in chime with the minister.

"Probably; but how do you ascertain it to be the sentiment of the Baptist denomination at large that their deacons should omit to serve unbaptized persons presumably Christian offering themselves

for participation at the Lord's Supper? There are no authoritative ecclesiastical documents to which appeal can be made. How is the existence of a sentiment such as now supposed by you satisfactorily ascertained?"

The deacon did not know; the minister did not know; nobody present seemed to know. The deacon felt his standing-ground to be failing him. He wanted to be courageous; but he wanted still more to be right.

"What is restricted communion, the principle and the practice?" meditatively proposed the minister, as if seeking to set one stake in a sure place and so find a base-line to triangulate from. "Is it not simply the principle and the practice of not inviting to the Lord's Supper, even from among presumed Christians, those not deemed to be baptized—this on the one side, and on the other, not accepting from such persons invitations to partake of the Supper with them? Are we bound to go farther than so far, and in individual cases actually pass by in the distribution those of our brethren who, uninvited, present themselves for participation with us? Is not our duty exhausted when we have abstained from inviting? May we not then leave all beyond to the responsibility of each individual soul?"

Was here a stake driven that would hold? That seemed to be the point of reflection for all present.

"How is it, deacon, supposing the question brought up in a meeting of your church—the

question I mean of instructing you deacons what course to pursue in a case like that supposed of Mr. John H. Martin? Consider, deacon, would you favor the church's giving their deacons hard-and-fast instructions to commit the ostensible rudeness of inhospitality in act, by conspicuously neglecting such a proposing communicant as Mr. John H. Martin? Or would you not rather advise the church on some such wise as this: 'Brethren, it is enough if, with becoming frequency and distinctness, stating our reasons, we cause it to be understood that we Baptists do not invite and do not accept invitations outside of the number of those deemed by us to have been duly baptized. It is gratuitous and unwise to go further, and violate apparent courtesy in act, by openly omitting in service single individuals here and there happening to be, not invited, present with us at the Supper?''

The "stalwart" deacon finally decided, the minister agreeing, that the latter course would be the better, and that every just condition of fidelity to the principle of restricted communion would thus be amply satisfied.

I ought perhaps to add that, in the course of the conversation, an imperfect analogy for mutual relation between Christians of one church and another at the Lord's Supper, was found in the relation of host and guest at the family table. The servants of a house should not take it upon themselves to discriminate between their master's guests at table. The fact of a man's sitting at the master's table

should be accepted by the servants as presumptive evidence of his right to sit there, and he should be treated by them accordingly. So the deacons, or servants, of a church should treat as proper communicants all who, in point of fact, present themselves as ostensibly proper communicants. This, whether the Supper is considered to be dispensed by the Lord as master and host, or by the church itself acting in that capacity. In either case the deacons or servitors are not to discriminate.

If, looking at the matter, now, from a different point of view, we conceive of the deacons as mere hands and feet to the church, the church itself being in place of servant to the Lord to spread for him his feast, still we arrive at no different conclusion. The church as servant—the church therefore as not exercising hospitality, but merely ministering a hospitality not its own, but the Lord's—has manifestly no right to invite guests according to its own ideas of comity. It is the Lord's table, not the church's, if we assume this point of view. The church therefore—whether in its collective capacity for instance by a vote, or representatively through its deacons—must invite only as organ and voice of the Lord; invite, then, only such as the Lord himself invites—namely, the baptized and obedient. On the other hand, this principle of invitation having been distinctly set forth so that all may understand it, the responsibility of the church is exhausted, and the church through its deacons has no duty of discrimination among pro-

posing communicants. It may and it should serve all alike that present themselves at the table. The idea of restricted communion requires nothing more than this, and the amenities of close communion will be satisfied with nothing less.

The foregoing view is not an individual peculiarity of my own. It is, as I believe, the view and the usage of the great majority of enlightened Baptists—Baptists, I mean, that bear the name (the nick-name, I may term it) of “close communion” Baptists. My venerable Congregationalist correspondent had his sensibilities wounded by a Baptist deacon who, of course without discourteous intention, was unnecessarily and unwisely courageous in demonstrating his convictions. It was enough if the unbaptized brother partook without invitation. Serving him would not have been inviting him. It would have been simply and only serving him. There would have been no violation of the principle and the practice of restricted communion. There would just have been a case of the amenities of close communion. Reciprocity in such amenities would, of course, imply that Pedobaptists should not consciously and purposely offer themselves as communicants at the Lord’s Supper where that Supper is provided by Baptists.

CHAPTER XXX

ROOM AMONG BAPTISTS FOR DIVERSE OPINION

I SPEAK in the present chapter under the form of exhortation addressed to my own Baptist brethren ; but I shall be grateful if my brethren not Baptists learn hence something of the spirit that already, as I believe, and in a growing degree, animates the mind and the heart of our denomination.

I plead, to ears willing, I am persuaded beforehand, for room among Baptists for diversity of opinion. One word will express the general principle which ought, as I think, to govern Baptists in dealing with their own dissenting brethren. That word is, tenacity. It should be tenacity exerting itself in two directions. I would have tenacity of the truth, and I would have tenacity of the brethren. That is to say, having my convictions clear, I would hold them strongly ; but, having also my brethren dear, I would be very reluctant to let them go. The tenacity that I recommend should be tenacity with its right hand holding the truth and with its left hand holding the brethren. These two, the truth and my brethren, I would draw together if I could ; but I would hold the truth with my right hand. If either grasp relaxed, it should not be my grasp of the truth.

Under this principle of two-handed tenacity, I would allow within denominational bounds the utmost possible freedom for the play of diversity in opinion. This should not be because I think one opinion as good as another. It should not be because my own opinion is uncertain. It should not be because I recognize it as every man's right to think as he pleases. This, on the contrary, I recognize it as no man's right to do. No man has the right to think in any other way than the true way. We are bound to think the truth. Absolutely, and before God, now I mean. Relatively, and before men, we have all of us our right, in a certain sense, to think what we will. That is, no one has a right to hinder us from thinking what we will. But it is not because I hold this to be true, that I would be indulgent to diversity of opinion. Indeed, if we are severe in our test of this truism, we shall find it a truism exceedingly empty. Nobody *can* hinder me from thinking what I will, except in one way—namely, by convincing me that I think wrong. And, in that way, it is every man's right, and any man's right, to hinder me from thinking what I will, or, rather, from thinking what, but for such hindering, I should. Nay, if I think wrongly, it is more than your right, it is your duty to hinder me from that wrong thinking. And now I touch the reason why, at least *a* reason why, I would tolerate divergent opinions among Baptists. It is because such tolerance I believe to be the right way to bring about *unity of opinion in the truth*.

Thus you see I do not favor diversity of opinion. I only favor tolerance toward diversity of opinion. Diversity of opinion is not good in itself. It is an evil in itself. It implies a mistake, a wrong somewhere. There cannot be two contradictory opinions about the same point, and both opinions be true. One at least of those two contradictory opinions must be false ; and both of them may be. The fact that both of two contradictory opinions may be wrong points to a reason for mutual toleration between them. Together they may conduct to a third opinion that shall be right.

But unity of opinion also is no good in itself. It may be unity in wrong opinion. That would be an evil, not a good. What is desirable is unity in right opinion. The straight path to this is tolerance toward different opinions.

But now, observe, tolerance toward opinion varying from yours does not mean indifference on your part toward that varying opinion. Indifference here would be stagnation, death. Tolerance on your part supposes conviction on your part ; but along with conviction, patience, faith, love, zeal to persuade. This is movement, life. For me to tolerate an opinion different from mine does not imply that I should let the different opinion alone, as having probably an equal chance with mine of being the right opinion. I tolerate in another an opinion believed by me to be wrong, not because I am willing that such wrong opinion should continue to be held. Quite to the contrary, it is because I am

not willing, and because I wish to convince my brother of his mistake.

But now it is time we made a distinction or two. The first distinction to be made is this : When we say here diversity of opinion, we do not mean diversity of opinion. We mean declaration and propagandism—or, if not propagandism, at least discussion—of opinion diverse from the general sense of the denomination. Silent diversity of opinion, that is, diversity of opinion not avowing itself, as of course it cannot be known, cannot therefore be dealt with. It is not mere diversity of opinion ; it is diversity of opinion expressing itself, it is freedom of discussion within the limits of denominational unity, that we are here treating. This may have been tacitly understood all along ; but it is well to have the distinction frankly outspoken. I say silent diversity of opinion cannot be dealt with. This however is not absolutely the case. There is one way of dealing with even silent diversity of opinion. It may be invited to express itself. Or if it show signs of speaking spontaneously, it may be met with encouragement to do so. This I favor. Give diversity of opinion a chance. Let it speak out. Listen to it, not to convict it and to condemn it peremptorily as wrong, but to consider its claim and canvass it candidly. We want life, not death. We want orthodoxy forming, in preference to orthodoxy formed. This because orthodoxy formed is a fiction ; and fiction is not what we want. We want fact ; and orthodoxy

forming may be a fact. What I mean is, if anybody supposes that he has reached the end and found an ultimate orthodoxy, that soul is mistaken. There is always more for us yet than we have hitherto found. Let us reach forward to find the more. The result of so reaching forward will be orthodoxy constantly forming. Arrest of this process is suspension of life. Whether you regard the individual Christian, the particular denomination, or the church at large, this remains true.

We may use an illustration. The life of the individual Christian, the life of the denomination, is like a process of crystallization not finished but going on. The individual Christian, in the article of becoming a Christian, embraces a certain principle that is thenceforth to him an origin or center of crystallization. About this principle there gather for him in cluster successively all the truths and precepts of Christ. This process of gathering continues, or should continue, until all are taken up and aggregated into their proper place and form. The end is orthodoxy; but the end is not yet, for any one of us all. The gathering principle, the origin of this transcendent crystallization, can be but one thing. It is the idea of absolute obedience to Christ. This idea grasped, the eventual result is insured. But there is sometimes arrest of the process. Then, as in literal crystallizing, a little agitation is useful. The uncrystallized mass needs disturbance that the process of crystallization may be resumed and continued. The disturbance re-

quired is discussion. Let there be plenty of discussion, say I.

What is true for the individual Christian is, in a somewhat different sense, equally true for the Christian denomination. The denomination, if it is in a normal state, is incessantly crystallizing. The process is never complete. If the process intermits, that is a sign of suspended vitality. What Baptist is there that wants his denomination to lie inert and quiescent? Who but wishes it to be alert and alive? Let it be shaken up, if necessary; but let it shake itself up. Crystallization, remember, is hastened by stir.

I say, Let it shake itself up. For, observe, I do not recommend importing agitation. Or, to speak plainly, I do not recommend introducing into the membership of our churches, much less into the ranks of our ministry, persons who know themselves to be, and who make themselves known to be, not in harmony with our well-understood views as Baptists. What is the Baptist denomination? What but the collective body of those Christians in each of whom the principle of obedience to Christ has crystallized about itself, together with other ideas held by them in common with evangelical Christians generally, the idea of doing Christ's will in the matter of baptism and the Lord's Supper? No Christian in whose heart such a crystallization has not taken place is truly a Baptist. I would not favor the admission of persons not truly Baptist into Baptist churches.

But now for a further distinction. We have been speaking of tolerance toward diversity of opinion. This of course is figure of speech. It is not toward diversity of opinion that we exercise tolerance. It is toward persons holding opinions diverse from our own. Let us condescend to be still more faithfully practical, and look about us at the state of things actually existing. What do we see? There is a numerous body of nominal Christians who are nominally Baptists. Within this numerous body there are some, I will not estimate how many, but undoubtedly there are some, an indefinite number, who have not, intelligently and profoundly accepting the principle of obedience to Christ, applied that principle as Baptists apply it to the matter of baptism and the Lord's Supper. These Baptists, that is to say, are nominal Baptists only, not Baptists in fact. Of such nominal Baptists a large proportion lie quiescent within the bosom of the denomination, making no sign. There are, however, a few who become roused to consciousness of being out of harmony with their environment. These then demonstrate their diversity of opinion. They seek to establish harmony between themselves and the denomination. This they do, not by changing themselves, but by trying to get the denomination to change. Now it is with reference to just such nominal Baptists as these that I would say: Let them have their full chance to convert the denomination. If they succeed, they will have deserved their success. If they succeed, it is more than

probable that the denomination at large will be gainers ; for their success will be strong presumptive proof that our dissenting brethren were right and we were wrong. I say : Give these brethren full opportunity to convert us. Do not cast them out. Do not abuse them. Do not muzzle them. Do not browbeat them. Do not badger them. Treat them gently. Treat them respectfully. If they bring arguments, ponder their arguments. Answer their arguments if you can. Perhaps you will gain your brother. Meantime, at any rate, the truth will have been subserved. I believe heartily in discussion. "Discussion," mark, I say, not controversy ; for there is a distinction. Discussion treats subjects. Controversy is apt to treat persons, and very often, I grieve to say, mistreat them. No controversy then, say I ; but abundant discussion. The Baptist denomination is large enough, and I believe is generous enough, not to grudge ample room for diverse opinion within its expanding bounds.

CHAPTER XXXI

HOW BAPTISTS SHOULD TREAT BAPTIST DISSENTERS

IN the preceding chapter I ventured to propose the theory of a method for use by Baptists in dealing with dissent from their own views arising within the limits of their own denomination. In the present chapter I undertake to illustrate the application of that theory in practice.

The method of dealing proposed did not contemplate in particular, did not indeed contemplate at all, the case of dissenting Baptist pastors remaining pastors while maintaining an attitude of conscious and aggressive dissent. Such a case would be characterized by peculiarities setting it off from other cases in a class by itself. Pastors are, by virtue of their pastoral office, under a two-fold responsibility—a responsibility as Baptist members, and a responsibility as Baptist teachers. As Baptist teachers they cannot with decency teach anti-Baptist doctrine. When Baptist teachers become convinced of their duty to oppose what it is of the very essence of their nominal office that they should support, there is nothing else for it; they must demit their nominal office. As Baptist members, they may continue for a time indefinite in a kind

of probation, until their provisional dissent is either corrected or permanently confirmed ; but the case of such a minister becomes now identical with the case of any dissenting Baptist member, not a minister. One and the same course of dealing, that which I am about to indicate, will apply indifferently to either. I wish, however, to say explicitly that no Baptist pastor has a right, except by consent of his church previously sought and obtained, to use the pulpit of that church even once to set forth and uphold doctrines essentially anti-Baptist. Thus the dissenting Baptist minister about to leave the Baptist ministry, cannot properly without his church's consent make that church's pulpit the place for defending in a farewell sermon his newly espoused belief. It is a breach of good faith to act otherwise than as I have pointed out ; but in the case of such dissenting brethren as have not assumed the responsibility of public teachers I repeat : Give them full liberty to entertain and discuss the points on which they find themselves for the moment at variance with the denomination.

Now, practically of course I see great difficulties in the way of carrying out this principle of toleration for diversity of opinion and freedom of discussion. The questions arise : How, at what times, in what places, to what extent, shall those brethren who differ with us be permitted to press their differences upon our attention ? There are two obvious methods open for them to adopt : one by speech, another through the press.

By speech men may propose, discuss, propagate their views, either privately or publicly. If a Baptist becomes aware that he holds some view different from that held on the same subject by the mass of his denomination, let him propound his view ; not publicly, but privately. If he is a sensible man, his first broaching of his peculiar view will be for the purpose of his own enlightenment. He will not begin to propagate his notion until he is quite sure that his notion is true. He will naturally go first to his pastor with his view. His pastor should receive his communication with all courtesy and hospitality. The pastor should himself be grounded in doctrine, and be able to impart instruction with meekness of wisdom. If however the pastor is conscious that he is not at the moment qualified to settle the doubt of his visitor, the visit will nevertheless be an excellent occasion to him of studying up the point. It will perhaps be just the stimulus that that pastor needed. When he feels ready to meet the applicant, let him do so with great candor, patience, openness to truth. If he succeeds in setting the doubt at rest, why, the end desired is gained, and there has besides accrued to the questioner the profit of clearer conviction ; while also the profit of some added knowledge and power of self-adjustment has accrued to the pastor.

If, on the other hand, the inquirer remains unconvinced, and seems confirmed rather, then what is to be done ? Well, if the doctrine concerns the substance of the gospel, or if it even concerns those

fundamental differences of view for the sake of which Baptists separate themselves into a denomination, the case is serious. Let the pastor satisfy himself on this point, namely, Does the inquirer profoundly and humbly hold the principle of absolute obedience to Christ? If yes, then have further patience, and trust that the anchor of this fidelity will bring him round at last. Counsel him to abstain from precipitately seeking to propagate his view. Should he make it matter of conscience to propagate his view, then point out to him the contradiction between his view and the view of the denomination. Make this very plain to him, and let him draw for himself the obvious inference that he cannot properly remain a nominal Baptist, and, from the vantage thus unfairly held oppose the Baptist view. The dilemma is irresistible. Either he should cease to be a Baptist in name, or he should not controvert Baptist views; but it is a great gain to have the man see this for himself and take action accordingly of his own motion. There is then no collision, no friction. If the pastor manages wisely, there will very rarely be nourished up a case of obstinate persistence in a course so manifestly unfair as willfully keeping ground among Baptists for the purpose of opposing Baptists.

These suggestions of mine are meant to apply only to instances in which diversity of opinion concerns points which are either in themselves essential, or which are essential to the Baptist denominational peculiarities. On other points, minor

points, diversity of opinion may be still more freely indulged.

But now suppose the very exceptional case of stubborn pertinacity in holding, and unquenchable zeal in propagating, dissident views of prime importance either to the gospel itself or to the distinctive tenets of Baptists. What, in such a case, is to be done? The man supposed holds his view, he moreover seeks to propagate his view, and he does these two things in contumacious maintenance of his standing as member of a Baptist church. What shall we do with such a man? Well, after sufficiently long forbearance, after sufficiently earnest efforts to reclaim him to the truth, after sufficiently clear exhibition to him of the wrong and inconsistency of his course; in short, after exhausting all the expedients of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, let the man be parted from the church, not on the ground of false doctrine held by him (of such false doctrine it is always supposable that, if his heart be right, he might be cured), but on the ground of his contentious and obstinate spirit, of his determined unfairness in doing that which it may indeed from his own point of view, be his duty to do—namely, to oppose Baptist principles—but which it certainly cannot be his duty to do, as himself ostensibly being what in honest truth he is not—a Baptist. We do not thus deny to the man his right to think as he pleases or to speak as he pleases. We simply withdraw from him the opportunity of doing these things as a Baptist falsely so

called. Or, rather, we simply decline to let, dishonestly to let, *our* stamp of Baptist remain on a man who is in our opinion no longer a Baptist. What could be more obviously our right than so to decline, what more obviously, indeed, our duty? I repeat it, with proper pastoral vigilance exercised in the first admission of members, and then with proper pastoral fidelity exercised in the treatment of dissent from our views, such excision, originated by the church, would seldom, very seldom, be necessary.

I have thus rapidly run out, through various phases, a supposed case of opinion differing from what is the recognized Baptist standard, and indicated the course of treatment that seems to me to be advisable. Obviously there is a limit prescribed by common sense to the privilege of a man not a Baptist who seeks to use his merely nominal Baptist character as a fulcrum for attempting the overthrow of denominational harmony.

The same principle holds good in application to the use of the press by a nominal Baptist for spreading anti-Baptist views. I have said and I say again: Give dissent a chance to speak. This, however, does not mean that it is the evident right of any dissenter whatever to occupy room in the columns of any denominational newspaper whatever for the proposal and advocacy of his views. The editor has his just option to admit or to exclude an offering from any contributor. No contributor denied place for his article has just ground

of complaint therefor—except occasionally it might be in a matter demanding personal explanation. The dissenter must take his chance with the editor exactly the same as other contributors have to do. No man is misused because, forsooth, some other man does not provide him an opportunity to propound his views to the public. If the public want to see his views, and one editor will not gratify the public, another editor probably will. If no editor will, who knows but there is an opening for a new journal? At least our dissenter can resort to the pamphlet. Let him pamphleteer the public freely. Let him scatter his pamphlet far and wide on the wings of the wind. Then, if the wind brings it to you, I do not advise that you put it disrespectfully into the waste-basket. Put it there respectfully, if at all. But read it first, should you happily have time. If not, at least glance it over. Perhaps your name will be in it. It may give you some new idea. At all events, it may shake up some old idea and set crystallization at work again within you. If, having been examined, it seems foreordained for the waste-basket, do not defeat its destination. Put it therein with a kind feeling for the brother that was at such unavailing cost and pains to set you right. If on the other hand the pamphlet is worth preserving, file it. The probability is that you will never disturb it more. But you always can, you know, if you choose.

I will add explicitly what implicitly I have already said, that if it is a pastor who finds him-

self definitively not a Baptist, my advice would be the same as that already given. His proper course is to withdraw from us of his own accord. There are late conspicuous honorable examples of this action ; but I would not have the denomination take the initiative in severance of relation. The denomination is great enough to be very patient. But now, to use a new figure, let the denomination have life enough in itself to be always clearing itself, by a certain fermentation, of intruding elements not properly belonging to it. That figure of fermentation suggests the whole philosophy of denominational as of church discipline in such cases. Let us work the alien elements out from among us. We ought thus to be working the denomination clear and homogeneous, all the time.

In conclusion, let me emphasize the necessity, never more urgent than now, of the right-hand grasp of which in the preceding chapter I spoke. Let us hold fast to the truth. There is a relaxing atmosphere all about us in which the tone of conviction is apt insensibly to be dissolved. We must brace ourselves resolutely against this influence. I have insisted on the left-hand grasp, that by which we hold our brethren. I close this particular discussion by insisting on the grasp of the right hand. Whatever we gain or lose, we must not lose the truth. Remember who said, "I am the Truth." Thank God, he holds us when but for that we should let go.

CHAPTER XXXII

SENTIMENTALISM AND SENTIMENTALISM

THERE always have been some spirits among American Baptists inclined by education, or perhaps by constitution, to desire more play for their religious sensibilities than the general Baptist usage and tradition in our country admit. The great American Baptist denomination has always been strong enough and generous enough to bear with these brethren, and to honor them too, for what they were, at the same time that it recognized clearly what they were not, and regretted it, chiefly for their own sake. The disposition of us all will certainly continue to be to give such warm-hearted brethren of our faith plenty of room and verge to be at home in our tabernacles, while they still remain precisely what they cannot very well help remaining. If they stay with us, as we hope they will, they will no doubt have to feel a little more constraint than they will like to feel in their ways of propagating their sentiments. There will only be required between us of the majority and them the reciprocal and equal exchange of a certain fraternal forbearance—surely a very simple and easy *modus vivendi*.

The whole matter with “Open-Communion”

Baptists is to a great extent a matter of temperament. The logic is all on one side of the question. It is *feeling*—stronger than reason—that makes any Baptist in this country an “Open Communion” Baptist. Now we are all of us at times subject to accesses of feeling that overbear our convictions for the moment, and so for the moment control our conduct. But there are not many of us that experience this habitually and constantly; those of us who do are sentimentalists. But sentimentalists are not in the majority among Baptists; they are not even in a very numerous minority. Most Baptists are Baptists on principle, and not by sentiment. It will never be otherwise; the nature of the case forbids it. It is only as it were by chance that a sentimentalist strays into the camp of the Baptists. The sentiments, as far as sentiments are distinct from judgment, tend in a large majority of instances to make men anything else in religion rather than Baptists. Thus Baptists are the best sifted perhaps among all modern denominations of Christians.

Now, I desire to guard my language against misapprehension. I use the word “sentimentalists” not in the way of levity, nor in the way of reproach. I use it simply for what it means—to note that class of persons who in any particular are led by their feelings rather than by their judgment. There may be exceptions, but the exceptions are very few, and I know of no exceptions, to the rule that among regular American Baptists those who

hold "open-communion" views hold them as sentiments rather than as convictions. This, I am well aware, might be admitted for true without its being admitted that therefore the views thus held as sentiments were not just views, and views quite worthy of being held as convictions. Of course too "convictions" are not certainly right, any more than "sentiments" are certainly wrong. I am fully of the opinion that sound sentiments will always chime with sound convictions.

I should heartily consent to a Christian's being led by his sentiments, provided only his sentiments had chief regard, as they should have, to his Lord Christ, and a regard strictly subordinate, as their regard should be, first to himself, and secondly to his fellows. The trouble with the sentiments as sovereign of conduct in religion is, that they are very apt to rule too much in the interest of indulgence toward self and of complaisance toward others, and too little in the interest of simple obedience toward Christ.

A prominent young minister of the Baptist denomination (who is now a prominent minister, no longer young, in a sister denomination of Christians) furnished at an important crisis of his earlier career a conspicuous illustration of my meaning. This minister would be the last man probably to suspect himself of being a sentimentalist, and I should be the last man to call him a sentimentalist in any offensive meaning of the word. But in a published sermon on the subject of the Lord's Sup-

per he, while still a Baptist pastor, used the following language at the point of culmination in the interest and power of what he said :

“If a Presbyterian or a Methodist come within these walls on the day of communion, and should feel his heart so moved by the services as to have at the close a deep yearning to remain and complete the hour’s worship by showing forth the Lord’s death in the use of this loaf and cup, I maintain that no courtesy of an invitation is needed. The requirements of his spiritual nature are supreme. He possesses an inalienable RIGHT, in the silence of the ordinance, to proclaim and ratify his love. . . And if in the providence of God I should be cast, as so many men frequently are, where I should find myself in a church not of my own faith, and the same inward yearning should come to my heart, I should assuredly use my personal liberty, denying most emphatically the authority of any body of men to call me to account.” (The capital letters are the minister’s own.)

Most Pedobaptist readers of the sermon will of course approve these avowals. Few however Baptists or Pedobaptists, will approve the reasons given for holding the views thus avowed. What I particularly call attention to is this: How exactly in the dialect of sentimentalism the forgoing quotation is expressed: “should *feel* his *heart* so *moved*,” “*deep yearning*,” “the requirements of his spiritual nature are supreme,” “possesses an inalienable RIGHT,” “*inward yearning* should come

to my *heart*," "should assuredly use *my personal liberty*"! The question is not at this moment whether the acts of intercommunion spoken of are right. Granted that they are right, what makes them right? Why, according to this sermon, "feeling," having the "heart" "moved," "deep yearning," "requirements" of the "spiritual nature," "personal liberty." This is pure sentimentalism; it is guidance by the feelings. If one *feels* in a certain way, he has an "inalienable RIGHT" to do a certain thing which he wants to do, and for no reason that appears but the feeling. Now, however valuable intrinsically "feelings" may be as guides in religious conduct, one thing is certain, and that thing is this: Baptists are not the people to accept their guidance. It has always been a characteristic of Baptists, as matter of theory at least, to walk by principle, and not by feelings. They are, I believe, the most numerous body of Christians in America. (I do not except the Methodists in saying this, although I should perhaps exclude from consideration the "probationers," so called, of the Methodist body.) But I venture to say that there are as few religious sentimentalists among American Baptists as among the members of any other American denomination whatever. It is therefore utterly useless to anticipate a fundamental change in their denominational usages as a result of sentimental considerations. We Baptists may change our practices in some respects, but when we do it will be because

our judgment is convinced, not because our "feelings" overmaster us.

I do not mean that there will not be occasional instances of individual deviation from established Baptist customs ; no doubt there will be. There are some—perhaps many—among us who under strong pressure of temporary emotion would assert their independence in conduct. These aberrations would seldom be made matter of very serious ecclesiastical inquiry, much less of severe vindictory discipline. They would simply be overlooked, or else would furnish occasion for seasonable pastoral instruction and invigorating exhortation to fidelity. The important point of difference is, that these infractions of usage would never be commended by representative Baptist ministers as matter of "inalienable RIGHT," nor accepted for such by representative Baptist churches. They would rather be treated as weaknesses, comparatively trivial weaknesses however, Baptist common sense generally refusing to yield to the victims of them the honors of martyrdom—martyrdom for "feelings."

I again insist that I by no means despise "feelings" ; they are equally honorable with judgment. But either "feelings" or judgment must be right to be deserving of honor. There are religious sentimentalists whom I esteem very highly, almost revere. The author of the sermon under comment alludes to one such. It is the woman with the alabaster box of costly ointment. She was evidently a woman of sentiment all compact, but it was

right sentiment. For this was its distinguishing characteristic: it made nothing of self and all of Christ. It lavished a large sum—perhaps a whole fortune for its possessor—in one self-sacrificing act of devotion to the Lord. Before such sentimentalism as this I sincerely make profound obeisance. But the sentimentalism recommended in this sermon is of a different quality. It regards Christ too little and self too much. This is constantly the besetting danger of “feelings” as the guide of conduct. “Shall I break the ritual order,” the preacher asks, “or impoverish my soul?” He answers “*emphatically*,” italicizing: “*Break the ritual order*, and from the broken alabaster vase let the perfume of a loving heart ascend to God.”

A “ritual order,” observe, is here recognized—that is, an order divinely intended as between baptism and the Lord’s Supper; that order is, baptism before the Supper. In an earlier part of the discourse this divinely intended precedence of baptism is strongly insisted upon; here however it is said, “*Break the ritual order.*” Most Pedobaptists recognize the same “ritual order.” A few Pedobaptists deny it or ignore it; none, so far as I know, advise to “*break*” it. Baptists as little certainly as Pedobaptists will be found ready to follow the revolutionary advice.

But note the violent contrast between the sentimentalism thus avowed and inculcated by the preacher, and the sentimentalism of the woman alluded to in the preacher’s metaphor.

She broke—perhaps “unsealed”—an “alabaster box,” to be sure. But the box was her own, and she had a right to break it. The “ritual order” that the sermon says “break” is the Lord’s, not ours. It is as if the woman had found an alabaster box belonging to the human Christ, and in the ecstasy of self-indulging love had ventured to break it for anointing him at his own expense. That act might have been forgiven, but it would hardly have been commended. It would assuredly have borne a widely different character from that of the act which was really performed. The woman sacrificed what was her own to serve her Lord. We are advised to sacrifice what is our Lord’s to serve ourselves; for this it means to break a “ritual order” that he has appointed, lest, forsooth, we “impoverish” our “souls” by keeping it. But the metaphor misleads in still another way. The “ritual order” is not a “vase” that holds the “perfume of a loving heart.” It may indeed be considered a “vase”; but then what the vase holds is something more precious far than any emotion, however holy, of a human heart. It holds a thought of God’s, a thought which we mutilate when we break the vase that holds it. The incense of right love to God is imprisoned by no ritual walls. It ascends continually, and never so straight and so swift as by the way of obedience. It were a shame to suppose that the “perfume of a loving heart” could be obstructed in its ascent to God by a recognized obligation to keep any one even of his

least commandments. Sacrificed "feelings" often burn a sweeter incense to Christ than "feelings" indulged. Better keep the "ritual order" for Christ's sake than break it for your own.

Of such religious sentimentalism, the sentimentalism that denies self to confess the Lord—of such genuine religious sentimentalism, I say, May we all of us, Baptists and Pedobaptists together, have more and more !

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FUTURE OF "OPEN COMMUNION" AMONG AMERICAN BAPTISTS

SO much is said from time to time by those with whom the wish perhaps is father to the thought, about the imminent prospect of a general breaking up of the traditional practice of the American Baptist churches with respect to restriction of the Lord's Supper, that it may be worth while to inquire coolly and candidly what in fact are the really determining elements of wise prediction in the case. Mere unfounded conjecture amounts to very little ; bold prediction, chiefly designed to help bring about its own fulfillment, amounts to still less. To collect and weigh a few of the considerations belonging to the question that are truly significant and decisive—this is the sole purpose of the present chapter. Whether restriction of the Lord's Supper is inherently a good thing or not, is not here to be discussed. The matter now to be examined is the following : What reasons are there in the actual aspect of things to lead us to anticipate a speedy change of the prevailing Baptist practice in respect to the Lord's Supper ? Are there any such reasons ? Let us see.

In the first place, there are no statistics obtain-

able to show the present relative numerical strength of the parties within the Baptist denomination in America that respectively favor and oppose the restriction of the Lord's Supper. Obviously therefore we shall have to rely for our estimate of future probabilities upon other indications. Other indications are not wanting.

There are the leading Baptist seats of learning ; on which side will the influence of these be found to be exerted ? Whatever may be the views of those who compose the present Baptist ministry, the future of the question of restriction, so far as this is to be decided by accredited public religious teachers, may be supposed to lie chiefly with those who are now studying in preparation to become Baptist ministers. Under what influences as to this question are Baptist ministerial students pursuing their studies ? Are we perhaps to look for a change to relaxed views on the part of Baptists in the next generation, resulting from the comparatively slow, but eventually potent, effect of training now being received at the various seats of higher learning in the hands of the Baptist denomination ? What are the facts ?

The facts, as I believe, are these : There is no college whatsoever belonging to Baptists, North or South—Baptists, I mean, of the so-called regular order—that is not presided over by a man committed by intimate personal conviction, by persuasion of expediency, or at least by equally controlling antecedent public record, to refrain from openly

exerting any influence against restriction of the Lord's Supper as the practice of Baptists. More : if there is any Baptist college in which a single member of the faculty of instructors makes such an influence felt, I do not know what college it is. The positive influence exerted through example and through teaching by college instructors on their students is at any rate mainly exerted in one direction : it is exerted toward keeping the lines now drawn as taut and tense as ever. I do not mean to say that direct efforts are made in ordinary and regular college education to mold the opinion of undergraduates on this subject. But whatever force there is in tradition, and whatever force in vigorous public advocacy well known to be exerted by many college teachers outside of college teaching, this force mainly works in favor of maintaining things as they are.

Of the theological seminaries, the same and more may be said. I do not presume to speak with absolute authority, but this I fully believe to be true—that all Baptist theological seminaries in the country teach, without faltering and without reserve, the theory and the practice of restricting the Lord's Supper to baptized believers. Of course, students may think as they please and act as they please ; they may, if they please, differ with their instructors on this point, as on others. Such privilege of dissent some of them freely exercise. Some of them, I say ; but the number, I am persuaded, is very small. The public opinion in these places

beyond doubt is overwhelmingly in favor of conservatism. If what I say is said too strongly, it is easy for some one who knows better to contradict me. I run my risk of contradiction. I do so without fear.

What is true of the faculties of instruction at these seats of higher education is, if possible, more emphatically true of the corporators and founders that control them. The men who give to endow Baptist institutions are generally men of convictions. Such men do not give money to have their convictions opposed, but to have them maintained and propagated. If they tax themselves to endow college or seminary, they claim, and they get, their share of representation in the administration of seminary or college. Just or not, this is what happens. For my part, I think that here what happens is just. I know of no instance in which the management of a Baptist institution of higher learning is not unquestioningly committed to a sound conservatism on the point now in question. In every way therefore it is, I believe, beyond dispute that these institutions are pledged and mortgaged securely for many years to come to the part of restricted communion.

I speak of this state of affairs, not now as symptomatic of the set of present public opinion among Baptists on the question, but rather as a condition creative of Baptist public opinion for the future.

There is another educational force at work upon the forming mind of the younger generation of Bap-

tists not less effective than that exerted by institutions of learning: this force is the denominational periodical press. Count over the papers devoted to Baptist views, and where is the one, the single one, that would consent to be called "open communion" in its convictions or its tendencies? I know not of a solitary instance among the whole number. This fact is of course indicative of existing denominational opinion; but, more pregnantly still, it notes an influence, omnipresent and penetrating like the atmosphere, that broods day and night over the general mind and conscience of Baptists. There may be a reaction, and the reaction may be irresistible when it comes. But is it likely to come this year or the next? Is it likely to come in our time? The prognostics certainly do not favor the conjecture.

An additional fact. There is no disputing that among the hundreds of thousands of American Baptists there have been some who at least have been lukewarm in their adhesion to strict Baptist views. Of this number some have been ministers. Of these ministers, most have preserved the silence becoming in those who have no vehement convictions compelling them to speak; a few from time to time have spoken out. Now, the sequel of the out-speaking of such is instructive. With no exception, one of two things will be found to have occurred: either the dissident has enlarged gradually the arc of his aberration from regular views, until the centrifugal force that started him on his path of

eccentricity has flung him quite outside of his original orbit, and ended by attaching him finally to a foreign ecclesiastical system—conspicuous instances might easily be mentioned—or else the dissident, recoiling from the logical consequences of his liberal departure, and redressing the violent flexures of his movement, has returned obediently to his proper place and relations. Seldom, very seldom, has the "open-communion" Baptist minister who, having the courage and the conscience of his convictions has frankly sought to make them prevail, succeeded in maintaining his position as pastor unimpaired. More seldom still—has it ever even once occurred?—has he succeeded in bringing his church over to the permanent adoption of his views. The sequel of these lax sentiments, when active and aggressive enough to pronounce themselves, proves almost always powerfully deterrent to such as might otherwise be tempted to espouse them and to undertake their advocacy and propagation. It may safely be said that the grip of the Baptist denomination on their established doctrine and usage in regard to the Lord's Supper has, on each occasion of intra-denominational movement to relax it, become stronger; and this not so much in spite of that movement as because of it. There has come to be more of intelligence and heart, less of mere habit and tradition, in the fidelity with which American Baptists cling to their principles. This is in some part due to fresh discussion provoked by movement within Baptist ranks in favor of a change

in their practice. In yet greater part it is due to the warning thought to have been discovered in the course of those few more prominent Baptist ministers who, having begun by efforts to change the views and usage of the denomination, have ended their fruitless efforts by ceasing to be Baptists.

In view of numerous perfectly unquestionable indications such as those which have now been set forth, what chance, to the rational eye, remains of an encouraging future nigh at hand for "open communion" among American Baptists? Barely one: our strength may turn out to be our weakness. Young Baptist ministers may come to understand that "open communion" is a road so sure and so short to loss of position as pastors, that at length subscription to the stricter tenet will become a matter, not of conviction, but of convention. Thus, in the space of a generation or so, lack of discussion may leave the Baptist minister unbraced to resist the constant penetrating and relaxing influence of extra-denominational environment. Then a breaking up of the old lines may take place, to be succeeded by a new stretching and fixing of them when the disastrous consequences of letting them go have had time to exhibit themselves. Meantime, the most probable thing is that individual instances of laxness will continue to occur about as often as necessary to make us seasonably strong and vigilant beforehand.

Their view in regard to the qualifications necessary for admission to the Lord's Supper, may be a

mistake on the part of American Baptists ; but at all events the mistake, if it be such, is very deeply anchored. To remove it would be no light task even for strong hands, and even for a good many strong hands working at once and together. Granted however that it is a mistake, would it be worth while for a band of strong men to spend their strength in trying to remove it ? Is there not better work for such men to do ? Spurgeon, while living, was, on the best of testimony, credited with the remark that "open-communionist" though he was, still, were he a minister in America, he should not seek to change the fixed practice of American Baptists. The remark is eminently worthy of that sturdy common sense in the great English preacher which, not less than his fecund and manifold genius, was an attribute of his remarkable character. The case with us is manifestly one in which the living force of exertion would be very wastefully spent in overcoming the vast inertia of conservatism. This is especially true, seeing that in the present instance the inertia of conservatism has an astonishingly obstinate habit of rousing itself upon occasion into a multiplied energy of resistance and aggression.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE "TEACHING" ON BAPTISM: AN EXEGESIS

A CONTEMPORARY scholar and prelate of the Greek Church, Philotheos Bryennios, discovered about the year 1883 an important monument of Christian antiquity, which bears the title: "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles."

As to the genuineness of this document I have nothing to say or to suggest. I will presume it to be unquestionably genuine. As to the date of it, I need raise no question. Further, as to the authority that may have attached to it at the time of its original currency, my purpose does not require me to speak. Here is the document itself challenging interpretation. Let us try to interpret it.

Not of course as a whole, for I do not propose to write a volume; but in those parts of it which relate to the chief matters in difference between Baptists and Pedobaptists. I begin by quoting the first sentence of the brief paragraph that relates to baptism. I use a translation, sufficiently accurate, that happens to be at hand: "And touching baptism, thus baptize: having first declared all these things, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water."

Thus far no light is thrown on what is solecism

tically called "the mode" of baptism. An important light however is thrown on the antecedent conditions of baptism. Baptism, according to the Bryennios manuscript, is to be preceded by instruction, instruction inclusive of a large part, not to say of the whole, of the ethical contents ("all these things") of the gospel. This antecedent condition necessarily excludes from the right to baptism all persons not capable of receiving such instruction. Infants therefore are, under the authority of this ancient document, not proper subjects for baptism. The words of Christ, the Great Commission so-called, forming the last verses of Matthew, are thus, if this writing is decisive, decisively interpreted in the Baptist, as against the Pedobaptist sense; that is, the baptizing there enjoined by Jesus is shown not to precede, but to follow, the instruction there also enjoined. Let the date of this manuscript be that to which it is generally assigned, and the Pedobaptist view that infant baptism was not specifically mentioned in Scripture only because the Scripture gives the history of but the very beginnings of the Christian church when infant children of Christians were yet to be born, loses whatever plausibility it can in comity be admitted ever to have possessed. At the supposed date of the manuscript, the church was well established and infant children of Christians were of course numerous; but baptism was not to be administered except after full indoctrination of the candidate. The whole authority therefore, what-

ever that authority may be, of the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" is against infant baptism.

Baptism, evidently, in the view of the ancient writer and of those whom he represented, was important enough to be made matter of specific directions. "Living water" was to be preferred for the purpose of baptizing. An alternative however was allowed. Let us proceed with the second sentence on baptism: "But if thou have not living water, baptize in other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm."

The preference of living water seems to have been simply, or chiefly, a natural instinct which we can all perfectly understand. That however the preference should find expression in a summary so short of quasi-authoritative teaching, indicates a certain tendency of which we shall find further evidence in this section on baptism—a degenerate tendency, as I reckon it—towards ritualism in substitution for obedience.

The clause, "if thou canst not in cold," seems at first blush surprising and curious. Our own habits of life in this climate tend to mislead us. We here of course should expect to find, as a rule, cold water more accessible than warm. The circumstance had in view by the writer perhaps was that, in case of recourse to other than living stream or fountain, baths would be resorted to, in which the water supplied was artificially raised above its natural temperature. The use of such warm water was allowable in case of necessity.

The fact that all the directions of this section are addressed as to one charged with the duty of baptizing, not as to one charged with the duty of being baptized, seems to preclude the idea, which I have seen advanced, that there was a concession in favor of candidates for baptism physically too feeble to resist the shock of a plunge into cold water.

The next sentence of the section proceeds: "But if thou have neither, pour on the head water thrice in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit."

Here, now, is something noteworthy. Whereas the other directions have said, "Baptize," whether "in living water," "in other water," "in cold," or "in warm," the present direction, designed for a case in which the supply of water fails, no longer says "Baptize," but uses an entirely different language. It does not say, "Baptize *by* pouring." It does not use the word "baptize" at all. The writer is now dealing with a case in which baptism was out of the question. Something else is to be substituted in the place of baptism. It shall however be something as nearly approaching the original and proper observance as circumstances will permit. Water is used not in the way of sprinkling, but in the way of pouring. The pouring must be upon the head. This pouring must be thrice repeated. There has been, up to this point in the manuscript, no suggestion of three-fold or trine baptism, such as became, at some times and in some places, the usual ecclesiastical practice.

Repetition of the act enjoined is here first suggested in connection with a case that precluded a possibility of submersion. Whereas, for all that appears, a single submersion or baptism, where this could be had, was deemed completely sufficient, in a case where submersion or baptism could not be had, the act of pouring, which was substituted, must be thrice performed in order to satisfy the scruples of the ancient writer. The meaning of this seems to me to be clear. The closest approximation possible with the means at command was always carefully to be made to the original, normal baptism enjoined by Christ. Water three times poured out on the head would be likely, in running down the person of the candidate, to wet every part of the surface, with some approximation at least to the same thoroughness as attended a literal submersion of the body.

Such seems to me the plain and simple common-sense interpretation of this much-talked-about new light on the subject of baptism.

The next and last sentence of the section reads thus: "Before baptism, let the baptizer and the baptized fast, and any others who can ; but thou shalt bid the baptized to fast one or two days before."

The germ of ritual manifestly begins here to unfold. The unfolding advances in the first sentence of the next following section: "And let not your fasts be with the hypocrites ; for they fast on the second day of the week, and the fifth, but do you fast on the fourth and on the Friday."

Whatever place, whatever authorship, whatever degree of authority may finally be assigned to this widely advertised monument of Christian antiquity, the note of ritualism contained in the last foregoing sentence is in itself enough to difference the Bryennios manuscript broadly from the New Testament writings. And I, for my part, judge the document by the New Testament, and not the New Testament by the document.

The distinction which I have pointed out between the language "baptize," which enjoins baptism, and the language "Pour on the head water thrice," which enjoins something else than baptism in the way of substitute for baptism, shows plainly enough that the Greek term "baptize" had not, at the date of this document, acquired a technical "sacred" sense different from the sense which it bore in ordinary speech. The ancient writer did not say, as a writer in these times to express the same thought would say: "Baptize by immersion where you can; where you cannot, baptize by affusion." The ancient writer says instead: "Baptize where you can; where you cannot, pour water three times on the head."

Established and prevalent practice is no doubt capable of modifying permanently the meaning of terms. The last resort of candid scholarship, in the way of defending other practice than immersion for baptism, is the postulate of a new, a technical, a "sacred" sense thus superinduced by usage upon a term confessed normally to mean

immersion and only immersion. It would be very unenlightened, or very uncandid, not to admit that such a polarization of the Greek word baptism is possible. Such a polarization has in fact supervened. The crucial question is, When did it supervene? Had it supervened already when Christ said, Baptize? If so, the Baptist ground fails; and no argument whatever for Baptist views as to the true act of baptism can stand. Of course I should maintain that on those who affirm the "sacred" sense rests the burden of proving that such a sense had in fact been acquired. In the absence of testimony favoring such a sense, the regular sense is constantly to be presumed. Take now the present antique document. For a case evidently implying immersion, simply the word "baptize" is used without explanation, entirely as if no explanation were necessary. Nothing is said about the *mode* of administering the rite. The moment however that a case is treated in which, for want of sufficient water, immersion could not be practiced, then "baptize" is no longer used; but a mode of ceremony different from what the mere word baptism would suggest, is elaborately described. Now, if the word "baptize" did not, at the time of this document, strictly mean immerse, but loosely meant "somehow apply water ritually," the use of language adopted by the writer defies explanation. Conceive the case: A "sacred" sense established for "baptize," making that word equivalent to "apply water ritually,"

and yet the writer saying, "Under certain circumstances, baptize; under certain different circumstances, pour water thrice on the head." In other words, "If water abounds, simply apply water (perhaps by sprinkling); if water is scarce, still apply water, only be sure you do it by pouring, and by pouring three times on the head"!

There are some good Presbyterians now who hold the idea of a "sacred" sense attaching to the term baptism, a sense quite independent of, and in fact quite different from, the original meaning. But what good Presbyterian, holding this idea, and wishing (were that supposable) to give the self-same directions of the Bryennios manuscript, would think that he was clearly expressing his mind by simply saying, as that manuscript says, "Baptize, if you have plenty of water; if not, pour water thrice on the head"? No; such use of language in the ancient writing decides beyond dispute that the secondary, indeterminate, "sacred" sense of "baptize" had not, at the date of that writing, yet been acquired by the word. "Baptize" still meant baptize; this, nothing more, nothing less, and nothing other. It will take ages of practice restored to accordance with the law of Christ, to bring back, from its long conversion effected through practice not in accordance with the law of Christ, one of the simplest of all possible common words to its first and only legitimate meaning. But in the face of whatever discouragement, let us never despair. There is one end, and only one, to all dif-

ferences among Christians. That end is the mind of Christ.

One thing of consequence is further to be noted, namely, that although as to ritual the binding force of the manuscript may fairly be questioned, as to the contemporary import of language, the manuscript is, in the nature of the case, authoritative and final.

Is then the Bryennios manuscript in effect a Baptist document? I do not care to answer yes. But let us see what would be the practical result if the document should be accepted as authoritative in the matter of baptism, and its directions, letter and spirit, implicitly obeyed. Under that condition of course immersion would be practised where immersion was practicable, and no one would be baptized until instructed in the gospel.

Now, as everybody will admit, immersion strictly confined to instructed believers is with us in this country entirely practicable. Immersion therefore—immersion confined to instructed believers—would, were this document loyally followed, be here universally and exclusively practised. Every line that separates Baptist from Pedobaptist would thus disappear. Without its being decided whether the Bryennios manuscript is Baptist or anti-Baptist, the simple adoption of that writing as a rule of practice would make Baptist and Pedobaptist happily one.

I think I can answer for it that Baptists will not stand in the way of so desirable a consummation.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE "TEACHING," FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

THE Bryennios manuscript has been examined in various quarters and of course to varying results for the instruction it may be made to yield respecting the contemporary actual usage of baptism observed by that section of the Christian church which the document may be assumed to represent. There is available a second quite different point of view—a point of view already hinted at in the chapter preceding, but elsewhere, I believe, remaining as yet quite unrecognized—from which this ancient monument may be studied in its article on baptism with promise of certainly not less fruitful results. It is from this second unnoticed point of view that I propose in the present chapter to examine the so-called "Teaching."

There is, I may confidently take for granted, no difference of opinion among good Greek scholars as to the true original meaning of the Greek term that we transfer to our own language in the word "baptize." Every one qualified to express an opinion on the subject will say that *Baptizo* means, and means only, Immerse. That is, in the ordinary secular usage of Greek speech. It is however

maintained by some, perhaps by many, that, in ecclesiastical language, this term came early to bear a peculiar, a quasi-technical, a sort of "sacred," sense, a sense to a great degree independent of its natural first descriptive meaning. That such is now indeed the case with respect to the word, no one will pretend to deny. Baptize has ceased with most of those who use it—notably however, *not* with those to whom Greek is a vernacular—to import an act of immersion. It simply means to apply water to a person in solemn ritual in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; this, without any strict thought conveyed as to the mode of the application. This secondary acquired sense of the term we may briefly characterize as the "sacred," in distinction from the secular, or ordinary, sense.

As incidentally pointed out in the preceding chapter, a question suggested of no little importance is, *When* did the word acquire this sacred sense? Had it already acquired this sacred sense when Jesus used it to establish his ordinance of baptism? If so, then of course the Baptist view of baptism is a mistaken view—mistaken, that is to say, as to the form of the rite. As to the proper subjects of the rite—a matter of vastly greater moment—the Baptist view would remain unaffected by any change whatever that truth might enforce respecting the meaning of the word "baptize."

Now at the moment at which baptism was *first* appointed to be a sacred rite, whenever that occa-

sion was, it is almost certain, I myself regard it as quite certain, that the word and the thing corresponded. That is, when any chosen act is first erected into a rite by being enjoined for a specific religious purpose, the word enjoining that act will inevitably be a word describing that act. This, I repeat, when the ordinance is *first* established. Otherwise, how shall the ordinance be understood, so as to render obedience possible? If it be replied, By example, then I ask, Is it conceivable that a religious teacher should, for instance, say, *Plunge* each disciple in the water, and immediately proceed to exemplify his command by *sprinkling* a few drops on the forehead of the same subject? No, the word baptism and the thing baptism in the beginning agreed. Later there might come to be, later there did come to be, a difference. Despite the description of the act, contained in the word commanding the act, the act was changed, the word remaining the same. At length the word, in this particular application of the word, lost its strict original meaning. The word came to *mean* what the act came to *be*. There was agreement again. But it was now the word agreeing with the act, instead of the act agreeing with the word. This beyond any possibility of dispute is the natural history of the sacred sense finally acquired by the word "baptize."

The question, I repeat, is, When did the change of sense take place? Had it already taken place in New Testament times? If it had, and if the

changed practice that brought about the changed sense still persisted, there would of course be no influence at work to restore to the word its primitive meaning. "Baptize" would continue uninterruptedly to carry the new meaning that it had once thus acquired.

This new meaning attaching to the word may fairly enough be expressed by the phrase, Somehow apply water ritually. Let us proceed to inquire whether or not "baptize," in the Bryennios manuscript, bore this sacred sense. If it did not then it must have borne the original sense "immerse." In that case, there follows this pregnant conclusion: The sacred sense of "baptize" was a growth, a growth of date later than the date of the manuscript; still more therefore of date later than the date of the New Testament.

Let us recall the language of the "Teaching" so styled:

"And touching baptism, thus baptize: having first declared all these things, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water."

Now, as I have said, the alternative is rigorous. Either "baptize" here means, somehow apply water ritually, or else it means immerse. Try for yourself, substituting in the foregoing extract the two different equivalents of baptize, and see which fits better. The writer says "*Thus* baptize," and then describes *how*—first by requiring previous instruction of the candidate; second, by bidding the act

to be performed in the name of the Trinity ; third, by bidding it to be done *in* living water. Not a word as to the *form* or nature of the act. That is all assumed to be sufficiently conveyed in the word itself, baptize. Now, upon your conscience, did baptize describe the act, or did it not, in the view of the ancient writer ? If it did, then it bore no indeterminate sacred sense, but meant distinctively immerse. Which do you think was the writer's meaning ?

There follow in the manuscript certain suppositions as to water supply, with directions fitting each, the word "baptize" seeming throughout to the ancient writer a sufficient practical guide to the right form of the act. Last comes the supposition that water supply of whatever sort fails. Here is the much vaunted heavy piece of ordinance supposed by some to be supplied against the Baptist view out of the arsenal of Christian antiquity ; we shall see it turned square about and trained point blank upon the opponents of the Baptist view : " But if thou have neither, pour on the head water thrice in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit."

"Baptize" has been the direction, and the only direction, up to this point. Now it is no longer "baptize," but "pour out water." Mark, if "baptize" meant to the ancient writer, "somehow apply water ritually," then there issues this very curious result ; we have already once considered it, but consider it again ; it cannot be considered too thoughtfully :

Where you have water, apply water ritually, no matter how, perhaps by immersion, perhaps by pouring, perhaps by sprinkling; where you have not, pour out water thrice on the head. That is, in case there is no stint of water, you may *sprinkle* water; but if water is scarce, you must needs *pour* water out on the head, and do it three times!

This inconceivable absurdity springs necessarily out of the supposition that "baptize" was employed by the ancient writer in the sacred non-descriptive sense. Try how you will, there is, if you take baptize in the sacred sense, absolutely no escape from this unthinkable absurdity. If you do *not* take it in the sacred sense, you must take it in the ordinary secular sense, immerse, and conclude with certainty that up to the date of this document at least, the word baptize in ecclesiastical usage still bore its original proper sense. This conclusion leaves the word as found in the New Testament carrying everywhere its first strict descriptive meaning, Immerse.

Now, that the expedient of pouring out water on the head was conceived of by the writer, not as baptism but as a substitute for baptism, is shown alike by his not saying, "Baptize (apply water ritually) *by* pouring," *and* by his repeating, for this case, the formula, "in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit." He did not repeat the formula for the two cases preceding. He had already once given the formula for all cases of true baptism. That sufficed till he came to a case

where true baptism was out of the question. Then he provided a substitute for true baptism, namely, the pouring out of water, adding, "Do this in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit"; an addition perfectly natural on the hypothesis that he was conscious of dealing now with something that was not proper baptism, but quite unnatural on the hypothesis that pouring out of water stood on the same ground with immersion.

Is it objected, But the writer prefaces the whole article with the title, "Concerning *baptism*," and closes it with "Before *baptism*," thus evidently having regard, together with the other cases, to the case of the pouring out? I reply: The case of the pouring out would in the nature of things be highly exceptional, and so the reference to it has the force and relation only of a parenthesis. The language before and after was not influenced by a mere exception parenthetically introduced. We might for illustration suppose an approximately parallel example. A military oath is to be administered among a mixed population. The order concerning it might read as follows: Concerning the oath, thus administer it. Having first explained everything, swear the man upon the Bible. If he be a Hindoo, swear him upon the Veda; if he be a Mohammedan, upon the Koran. (If he be a Friend, let him simply affirm.) Before the oath is sworn, let both parties uncover their heads.

Here now the word "oath" precedes and succeeds the rare case supposed of an affirmation taking the

place of an oath. It does not however thence follow that affirmation is regarded by the authority issuing the order as properly an oath. The distinction in the meaning of terms remains. The affirmation, for a particular case, answers. That is all. So no doubt in the view of the ancient writer the pouring out of water for the extraordinary case supposed did very well as a substitute for baptism. But the difference in the meaning of *terms* did not for that reason disappear. The difference persisted, and the difference is inseparably intertwined with the very texture of this article on baptism. No ingenious violence of exegesis will ever succeed in rending it away. There it clings, and there, until the fabric itself is destroyed, it will continue to cling.

If you go to the "Teaching" so-called, for current contemporary *usage* simply, why, you undoubtedly have pouring, for a certain extraordinary case—a case that with us could almost never occur—admitted to stand in place of baptism. A good many of us do not much care what an unknown ancient writer, certainly not inspired, thought would do as a substitute for baptism the *thing*. But we ought all of us to be interested in knowing what he meant by baptism the *word*. For, no change in the sense having yet at that time supervened, what this ancient writer meant, Jesus before him also meant. What the ancient writer meant is demonstrated, absolutely demonstrated, to be immersion. This therefore is what Christ meant.

Let us go by Christ's word, rather than by any man's word, or by any man's practice. "If a man love me, he will keep my words," Christ said. Christ also admonitorily asked, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE "SACRED" SENSE OF "BAPTIZE"

READERS who have in any way become fully persuaded in their own mind as to the validity of the "sacred" sense attributed by many to the word "baptize" in New Testament use, may safely skip the present chapter, which continues and concludes the discussion of the subject.

Of persons professing to be Christians, several classes may be distinguished, divided according to the attitude which, with more or less of clear consciousness, they respectively assume toward the ordinance of baptism; toward, that is, the two-fold command of Christ, Baptize, and Be baptized. Some professed Christians say, Baptism is a form merely; it is of no consequence that it be strictly observed. Such persons should properly be Friends; they should not pretend to baptize, or be baptized, at all. Some again say, Baptism is indeed to be observed; but as to the particular form of the observance, the tradition and usage of the church in general may be accepted for sufficient and authoritative guide. Such persons should be Roman Catholics. To neither of these two classes have I anything to argue.

But there is a third class, made up of those who, in the third place, say, What did Christ bid? Tell us that, make it unmistakably plain, and whatsoever he saith we will do it. To such persons, or more exactly to certain ones among such, I have here an earnest word or two, even at the risk of excessive insistence, to deliver.

For, in this last class, there are a considerable number of persons who say :

Jesus, we agree, commanded, Baptize and Be baptized; we agree further, that baptize, in ordinary Greek speech, means immerse, and only immerse. But, in sacred or ecclesiastical usage, we suppose and believe the word to have borne, even in Christ's own time, as indisputably it now bears in our time, a different signification. We suppose and believe that the confessed original descriptive sense of the term, namely, the sense of immersion, was from the first superseded in ecclesiastical usage by a wider, freer, less determinate signification, equivalent to "In any suitable way apply water to the person in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We therefore feel no force whatever in the elaborate, superflously elaborate, arguments of Baptists directed to showing that baptize meant exclusively immerse. So, undoubtedly it did—in other applications—but in this particular application, not.

Now this is perfectly intelligible language; and this language is in all godly sincerity held by not a few men among us; men who are most exem-

plary Christians, and at the same time most unimpeachable Greek scholars. If this language is sound as well as intelligible, is sound as well as undoubtedly sincere in many mouths, then the position of Baptists on the point of baptism, what in its form it properly is, cannot be maintained. *Is this language sound?*

To the right answering of that question the Bryennios manuscript contributes, as I have already attempted to show, some valuable help. The argument is, I think, worth repeating in a different form. For it is not only an irrefragable argument, but it is directed against what may be regarded as the very last, the most specious of the false notions on the subject of baptism with which conscientious Christian minds content themselves in not performing a straightforward, literal obedience to one of their Lord's most simple commands. It is, as I again assert my belief, demonstrated that the Bryennios manuscript by itself alone contains conclusive evidence that the looser, indeterminate, "sacred" sense of the word "baptize" had not yet, at the date of the production of the manuscript, become established; that the word "baptize" then still retained its proper native force and meaning of immerse. Of course from this, if this be made out, it will follow—and here lies the importance of the point—that, much more, the "sacred" sense was not established in New Testament times.

For, as if to make the incidental demonstration contained in the manuscript complete, at the same

time that the document shows us the "sacred" sense of baptism evidently not yet actually established, it also shows us that "sacred" sense not less evidently in the incipient process of becoming established. In short, there perhaps could not be imagined a more entirely and ideally satisfactory exhibition of the truth as to the real sense in which Christ used the word "baptize," than that exhibition which unexpectedly is brought down to us in this interesting monument of Christian antiquity. Let us examine the manuscript afresh, not now for the purpose of ascertaining what usage as to baptism was observed by those whom the document may be assumed to represent—that usage, beyond reasonable doubt, was immersion, where immersion was practicable, with pouring out of water on the head where immersion was impracticable—let us, I say, examine the Bryennios manuscript, not now for the archæological question of current contemporary usage, but simply and only for the philological question of the current contemporary force and meaning attaching in ecclesiastical language to the term baptize. No matter, I repeat, for the moment, what the ancient writer and his brethren *did* in the way of baptism. That is not to be our present inquiry. Our present inquiry is to be, What did they *mean* when they used the *word* baptize? Did they mean, apply water ritually in any suitable way that may be practicable, or did they mean immerse? The question is a simple one. It is not, What *was* the *thing*, baptism, for

the ancient writer and his brethren? but, What to them *meant* the *word* baptize? If the word baptize meant to them apply water ritually, then *perhaps* also it meant that to Jesus when he used the word. By no means certainly even in that hypothetical case; for the "sacred" sense may have been acquired in the interval between Christ's time and the time of the manuscript; whereas, if on the contrary the word meant strictly immerse, to the ancient writer with his brethren, then, not *perhaps*, but *certainly*, the word meant strictly immerse, in Christ's mouth. For the "sacred" sense once acquired by the word would never be lost by it, except through accomplished return to primitive usage, which accomplished return has never yet even up to this living moment occurred, though it may now fairly be regarded as in the incipient process of occurring. The present discussion is a humble contribution of help to that process already not obscurely observable.

Our immediate question then is, Did baptize in the Bryennios manuscript mean, exclusively, immerse? or did it mean, indeterminately, apply water ritually? Let us see.

Here, once more, is the language: "And concerning baptism, baptize in this way: Having taught beforehand all these things, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in living water. But if thou hast not living water, baptize in other water—in warm if thou canst not do it in cold. But if thou hast neither, pour water

upon the head three times in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. But before the baptism let the baptizer and the one (to be) baptized, and any others who can, fast ; but thou shalt command the one (to be) baptized to fast one or two (days) before."

Consider : in the foregoing we have a presumably authentic ancient use of the word baptize ; a use too occurring in a distinctively ecclesiastical document. Here inevitably there will be an example of the "sacred" sense, if such an example is anywhere to be found in the Greek literature of those times.

Let us suppose that the "sacred" sense indeed holds here, that baptize meant to the ancient writer apply water ritually. Under this elastic definition, the application might, of course, be by sprinkling. Introduce this idea and you have a remarkable result. That result is the following :

"In case water abounds, you may sprinkle water ; in case water fails, you must pour out water, and pour out water thrice on the head."

Consider this now at your leisure. Apply to the problem your best efforts. You will find it impossible, ultimately and hopelessly impossible, to escape the foregoing reduction to absurdity. The absurdity is inextricably, unescapably involved in the logic and language of this article on baptism in the Bryennios manuscript, if the word baptize, in that ancient ecclesiastical use of it, indeed meant apply water ritually ; if, in point of fact, it meant

anything else than strictly and exclusively immerse. Only suppose, however, that baptize meant immerse, and every difficulty vanishes. So simple, so self-consistent, so self-evidencing, is truth, when you once but get at the truth!

But here meets us an objection—an objection made in entire good faith. The objector says: Look at the foregoing article again, the whole of it—title, conclusion, and all. Do we not see that the article begins, “Concerning baptism”? Do we not see that the article ends, “Before baptism”? And is not the clause about the pouring out of water on the head embraced thus between two uses of the word baptism that oblige us to regard pouring out as, in the view of the writer, constituting baptism?

This is a fair question, and it shall have a fair answer. The fair answer is that the “sacred” sense was now entered on the road toward being established. The line of exceptional cases henceforward will be indefinitely extended, until at length the exceptions will overslaugh the rule. Then the “sacred” sense will have quite supplanted the true; a result long since accomplished, and now open to universal observation. For the present, however, the exceedingly exceptional case of water failing is referred to by the ancient writer just in passing, merely by way of parenthesis. It is dismissed from thought as soon as mentioned, and the writer proceeds with choice of language uninfluenced by what in its nature and relation was

purely parenthetical. In other words, the diction of the writer was here independent of his parenthetical insertion, precisely as everywhere the syntax of any writer is independent of such matter introduced merely by the way. The true relation to the article as a whole, of the present interjected clause, is capable of being very simply illustrated. Let it be supposed that an order is to be issued for the proper printing of enacted laws. That order might read somewhat as follows: "Concerning the printing, thus print. Having first made the proper examinations, print in ordinary modern type. If you cannot get this, print in antique type; if you cannot in large type, then in small. (In case you have not sufficient type of any sort, write in a fair round hand.) Before the printing, let the printer and proofreader carefully compare the original copy."

Now here the word "printing" both precedes and succeeds the parenthetical mention of "writing." Is, therefore, printing meant to include writing? Not in the least. Writing is simply, for a specified case, an admissible substitute for printing. That is all. If, however, it could be supposed that, through any influence, writing should gradually, for the particular purpose of preserving laws, supersede printing—the exception thus becoming the rule—then, at length, the word printing, used with reference to that purpose, might very naturally come to mean something so large and loose as to include writing too within its scope.

A fortune like this has actually befallen the word baptize in ecclesiastical use. But that fortune had not yet befallen the word when the Bryennios manuscript was produced. This is inexpugnably proved by the absurdity that flows from supposing the contrary. Here the absurdity is ; face it again : “If there is plenty of water, you are permitted to sprinkle ; if the water is scant, you are bound to pour.”

This result, I repeat, irrepressibly issues from regarding the word baptize, in the Bryennios manuscript, as meaning anything else than immerse. The word baptize therefore means there nothing else than that. Immerse is thus shown to have been, at the date of this document, still the one exclusive meaning of baptize. Much more was immerse the one exclusive meaning of the word baptize, when Christ lived on the earth, and when he used the word to enjoin his holy rite. The “sacred” sense of the term is accordingly a subsequent growth, and a growth springing from usage not conformed to the ordinance of Christ.

If this is not so, let some one show me how it is not so, how escape may be had from that reduction to absurdity which I once more submit : “For baptism, sprinkling of water will answer, if Jordan rolls at your feet ; pouring out of water is imperative if you have but a tumblerful at command” ; an absurdity which I assert to be inseparably—“inseparably” is the strong word I confidently employ—inseparably bound up with the supposition that

baptize meant in the Bryennios manuscript anything else than immerse. Immerse, therefore, baptize did mean to this ancient writer, and yet more to Christ.

"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

CHAPTER XXXVII

FEET-WASHING AS A RITE

BAPTISTS are sometimes pressed with the *argumentum ad hominem*. You are inconsistent, we are told. You make much ado about obeying the command, Be baptized, but the command to wash one another's feet you ignore. Why is this? If the command, Be baptized, is so very essential, how, pray, is not equally the command to wash one another's feet?

Well, I answer in all frankness, we are certainly bound to obey the one command no less than the other. We recognize no difference of obligatoriness existing between them. Both are absolutely binding and both therefore equally binding. This is our theory, and if our practice does not correspond, we are indeed inconsistent. But what makes you think we do not obey the command, Wash one another's feet?

Why, it is promptly replied, you have no practice of feet-washing, have you? There are bodies of Christians that observe such a rite, but Baptists certainly not. No, I rejoin, Baptists do not practise feet-washing. That is quite true. But it is not necessarily true that therefore they fail to heed the Lord's words, "Ye also ought to wash one an-

other's feet." The words that the Lord spake unto us, they are spirit and they are life. We trust that we heed them—all. At least, if at any point we fail, it is not because we do not hold ourselves bound by them all—this word about the washing of one another's feet included along with the rest. We obey.

But how? it is asked. We obey as do almost all our brethren of every name, by taking the attitude and performing the acts of servants and ministers to one another. This we, with the vast majority of our fellow-Christians, believe to be the thing commanded, and this we do. Our principle of obedience we apply here also, as we apply it everywhere else. But, return our brethren, how, if you understand the words of the Saviour about mutual washing of feet to admit of a figurative interpretation—how should you not allow us to put a figurative interpretation upon the Saviour's words about baptism? Nay, I reply, but so we will freely allow you to do. There is no objection with us; we consent, but you, on your part, refuse to accept the liberty. You, together with us, insist on regarding the command, Be baptized, as having a literal sense. You decline to interpret it figuratively. You interpret it literally; this first, and then you do not obey it. Mark, the command to wash one another's feet you take figuratively and obey it. We do the same. The command to be baptized we take literally and obey it. This command you likewise take literally, and then do not obey it.

Where does the inconsistency lie? Is it with us? Is it not with you?

The Friends, popularly called Quakers, take the view that, Be baptized, is figurative, for a spiritual experience commanded. The Friends therefore do not practise baptism. They are wrong, as we think; but they are consistent. The difference between them and you is, that while they thus are consistent and wrong, you are both wrong and inconsistent. They take the wrong view and act in regard of it. You take the right view and act in disregard of it. For you say, Be baptized, is a literal command; but you do not literally obey it.

In truth, the attempt on the part of Pedobaptists to convict Baptists of inconsistency for not practising feet-washing as a rite, is a boomerang that returns to deliver its blow at home. Baptists believe that feet-washing is not a rite prescribed by the Lord. They accordingly do not observe such a rite. Pedobaptists in this particular both believe and practise like Baptists. Baptists again believe that the command, Be baptized, is one to be literally obeyed. Pedobaptists believe the same. Thus far Baptists and Pedobaptists agree. At this point however arises a difference between them. Baptists literally obey by being baptized. Pedobaptists obey constructively, if at all, by saying that they once were baptized. Thus the charge of inconsistency made against Baptists comes back and lights upon the heads of those from whose hands it went out as a weapon.

But now how does it appear that, while baptizing is a rite to be observed, feet-washing is not? What features of difference are there to establish so wide a distinction between two commands of the Lord? Let us candidly examine and see.

In the first place, suppose feet-washing to be a rite designed for observance. Several questions arise when we go about to observe it. *When* shall the observance take place? *Where?* *How often?* *By whom* shall it be observed? *Upon whom?* Of course, I do not mean to imply that these questions, and questions like these, admit of no answer. They can all be answered, and a ritual practice be established. But how will they be answered, if answered? Whence? On what authority? The Roman Catholic Church has answered such practical questions, we all know how. Once a year the pope in St. Peter's goes through the form of washing the feet of twelve men, supposed to represent the twelve apostles. Those men are, I believe, carefully prepared beforehand for their part in the ceremony, by having their feet made immaculately clean, so that a simple touch at the pontiff's hands with the stainless napkin dipped in water suffices for the ritual purpose. Did the Lord mean to appoint a rite like this? Did he mean to appoint a rite at all? Would he appoint a rite and leave neither example nor instruction to teach us how, or when, or where, or how often, or with whom, we were to observe it? For note, not an instance is on record of the New Testament Christians observ-

ing this rite. Nay, the idea of such a rite is not so much as once hinted in the whole round of Scripture. (A doubtful phrase in one of the pastoral Epistles is the only possible exception.) No doctrine is associated with it, no illustration is drawn from it, no mention is made of it. Scripture is simply silent on the subject. If you wish to create a rite of feet-washing, you must create it with no help from the Bible, except simply the saying, "Ye ought also to wash one another's feet," together with the commentary supplied by the one narrative in which the saying occurs.

Contrast all this with what is true in the case of baptism. Here we have the command repeated again and again, in different forms; we have example after example drawn out in full, the Saviour's own baptism, the baptism of the eunuch; we have instances merely mentioned as occurring by thousands; we have important doctrines associated with it; we have vivid illustrations derived from it. Baptism as a rite to be observed and perpetuated is inseparably water-lined into the text of the New Testament. The difference between baptism and feet-washing is in these respects enormous. How the Friends can suppose that baptism is not a permanent rite of the Christian church, is as hard to understand as how anybody else can suppose that feet-washing is such a rite. The two are so violently contrasted that they cannot belong together.

Now what our Lord meant to enjoin was, we un-

doubtingly hold, such a spirit and such a behavior on the part of his disciples toward one another as was symbolized by his stooping to the menial service of washing their feet. He did not wish them to symbolize this spirit and this behavior ; he wished them to practise this spirit and this behavior. "If ye know these things," he says, "happy are ye if ye do them." This language could not well apply to the mere symbolic action of mutual washing of feet. The symbol he himself enacted. The things symbolized it was the part of his disciples to perform, and in the performing of them they should be blessed. Accordingly we do not see, as in the case of the Supper we do see, his disciples themselves following their Lord's example, and so engaging as participants in the scene of symbolic feet-washing. They undoubtedly understood him to mean by saying, "I have given you an example," I have in a visible symbol shown you what kind of spirit and what kind of behavior you ought to maintain toward one another. *As* he did, not exactly *what* he did, is the true idea. Had it been otherwise, had Christ really designed to institute a rite, had it been his purpose that his disciples should themselves symbolize the spirit and the behavior which he had just symbolized, what occasion could have been so fit as that very occasion for the first observance of the ceremony? Not a hint of any such understanding on the part of the disciples, or of any such intention on the part of the Lord, does the narrative furnish. It all reads as if the symbolic

act were to be the Lord's alone. It would be wide misconception on our part of the real spirit and purpose of what Christ did, a misconception amounting almost to a kind of irreverence, for us to enact over again a symbolism that he betrayed no thought of permitting to any men or to any man to share with himself in enacting. Let us leave the symbolism unique and complete, enacted once for all by our Lord. Let us not disparage it by repetition of our own. But the things symbolized, these let us do, and be happy in doing them according to the grace of his wonderful words. And let us not allow needless confusion of thought arising from the present narrative, to perplex our obedience to the explicit and quite unmistakable commands that enjoin baptism and communion. As to these commands, the symbolisms are ours to enact. Let us not fail to enact them. But we shall, in respect to baptism, fail to enact them, if we permit ourselves to baptize any that have not believed, or to proceed as if we could baptize any, even believers, without immersion in water.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION HYGIENICALLY CONSIDERED

THERE are several different ways in which the health and vigor of any organism may approximately be tested. Of these different ways I here mention three ;

First, you may observe the capacity of the organism to expel from itself elements entering it that are essentially foreign and unassimilable ;

Secondly, you may observe its capacity to assimilate and incorporate elements that properly belong to its structure ;

Thirdly, you may observe its capacity to endure without serious injury to itself the intrusion and presence of elements that resist its assimilative and appropriative activity.

I propose that we apply these three tests successively to the Baptist denomination in America, with a view to estimating in what degree that denomination may be supposed still to possess the vigor of survival and growth.

Let us begin with that test of vitality which consists in the capacity of an organism to rid itself of intruding elements essentially foreign to its constitution. I do not now mean the ability to do this

in the exercise of a desperate paroxysmal effort by which the organism itself may be almost fatally convulsed; I refer rather to those almost imperceptible, slow, remedial processes of life, in virtue of which, without strain to the body, the element that has entered it, but does not properly belong to it, is gently and decisively rejected. When there is a kind of convulsive agony of expulsion exerted—as, for example, in the case of a deadly poison, between which and the very secret of life there is suddenly waged a balanced and doubtful duel—that is a sign of vitality, to be sure, but of vitality in danger of being overpowered. On the other hand, if the progress of the functions of life is so steady and strong as to persist unconscious of impediment without intermission, like the working of mechanism regulated by a balance-wheel heavy enough to supply momentum constantly more than equal to any resistance—if, I say, the vital progress is thus steady and strong, flinging off easily and with no shock whatever proves not to be homogeneous with the structure of the organism, why then the health and vigor of that organism are shown to be pretty much everything that could be desired.

It would be more simple and natural to proceed with the application of our test in the present case by mentioning individual illustrative instances. These it would be very easy to adduce, but it might seem invidious and I forbear. Each reader will supply illustrations for himself. Certain it is that the Baptist denomination in America has mani-

fested a remarkable capacity to eliminate elements irreducibly foreign which had for a time attached themselves to it, and which during that time imposed upon a wide public of observers, as well as, very likely, also upon themselves, the impression that they actually belonged to its body. Again and again, within two or three decades of years, not to go farther back, it has fallen out that ministers calling themselves Baptist, and no doubt supposing themselves Baptist, having gone through a period of restlessness within the pale of the denomination (the denomination itself so calm meantime as doubtless still further to disturb these uneasy souls with the contrast of its own repose and immobility, refusing to feel their agitation, much more to partake of it) have at length found themselves insensibly projected along the line of their own tangential inclinations quite without the orbit of the parent body—all in a manner to have transmitted scarce reactive sensation enough behind them to apprise that body that anything had been happening to any one. It was the self-conserving force of the denomination naturally and normally disposing of elements that were not of it and that could not contribute to its strength. These brethren went forth from us because they were not of us. They would have remained, but that the body did not need them and freely let them go; they were out of their true place among us. This we knew better than they knew it themselves. We waited tolerantly, and they withdrew, unconsciously persuaded by our

behavior to take this action of their own accord. They were completely separated and insulated within the body before they withdrew. As, while they remained, the body was whole and sound without them, so their withdrawal was attended by no rent or schism of the body. They went quite alone, and they drew no following after them. The Baptist body is not appreciably either weaker or stronger by the change; but the change has shown the body's strength. The vitality of the denomination is proved to be vigorous enough to dismiss these ministers without violence of ejection, and certainly without violence of recoil. This is precisely as it should be with an organism full of health and strength. So much for the test of its vigor consisting in the capacity exhibited by the Baptist denomination to eliminate elements not properly belonging to its body.

But a sound organism ought to exhibit its sound condition by something more than its expulsive power exerted upon alien elements. It ought also to be capable of reducing to agreement with itself and subduing to its own nature elements superficially disposed to resist, but nevertheless fundamentally adapted to experience this appropriation of themselves. Apply this test of vitality to the Baptist denomination and you will not find the denomination wanting.

To every reflecting mind at all conversant with recent religious history instances will readily occur of Baptist ministers temporarily affected with a

desire to be irregularly free in demonstration of fraternal fellowship with the unbaptized, beyond what the well-considered usage of their denomination in this country would approve, who, after a season of moral and intellectual ferment indicative at once of honesty, of activity, and of immature conviction on their part, have cleared themselves and settled serenely down into enlightened and tranquil accord with the opinion of the majority of their brethren. These ministers were really of us, and they could not extricate themselves from us. The assimilative attraction of the great Baptist body for its own was too much for them. They yielded to the stress that was stronger. They stretched for a little the elastic bond that bound them to us, but the retractile elasticity drew them back. The test of soundness and vigor in an organism which consists in the capacity of that organism to overcome reluctance to be assimilated displaying itself in elements that really belong to its structure, is thus completely satisfied, in application to the body of American Baptists.

But, besides being equal to the task of expelling alien and hostile elements happening to adhere or intrude, and besides being equal to the task of subjugating elements essentially kindred that for a time resist assimilation, an organism really healthy and robust ought moreover to be able, if occasion arise, to go on thriving even though elements not friendly that have thrust themselves in obstinately remain, refusing alike to be gently rejected and to be hos-

pitably subdued. This test of its vitality the Baptist denomination in America will well bear to have applied. The kindly strength with which the body refrains from exerting itself violently to expel, and yet imperturbably proceeds to prosper without expelling, is to him who knows how to regard it aright a most edifying spectacle. The dissident brethren find themselves free within the denomination, their freedom there however somewhat conforming to a famous image for the freedom enjoyed by the will amid the alleged environment of fatal condition. They are like a drop of water fruitlessly free in the heart of a rock. That drop can move, but only within itself—by mutual interpenetration of its particles. So these brethren can agitate, but it is only themselves that they affect, and not at all the mass of the denomination that encloses them, and that encloses them without violating their freedom, while it does effectually nullify their power. They remain safely encysted, neither harmed nor harming, within the great generous body that they will not abandon and that will not expel them.

The Baptist denomination—tried by whatever one of the three tests named—is, I submit, in a fairly sound and hopeful condition.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WANTED—A MASTER

WHAT the current age needs is a master. It is too heady, too self-willed. Its fondness for freedom has grown morbid. License it means when it cries liberty. Insubordination is the disease of the time.

Tennyson made a right guess, half blindly, when he sang :

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell.

He saw the disease truly, but not quite truly the remedy. Not reverence, exactly—something a little more vigorous and rigorous—obedience, is the cure of our disease.

So I say, and so says Rome. But no matter who says it, it is true. Is Rome, then, right? Yes, right, and wrong too ; but more wrong than right. For Rome says to us : “ You need a master. Obey me and be saved.” I reply to Rome : “ Yes, we need a master, nothing else so much. A master certainly, but never you for master. You also need a master, you as much as we. We both need the same master. But the master we on our part need is not you, and the master you need on your part

is not yourself. Any master may, indeed, be not much worse than no master, but it is also not much better. No master and the wrong master will ruin us alike."

This is my answer to Rome. But the Reformation says, "You need a master." Yes. "And you are right in rejecting Rome." Yes, again. "Come, then, and take the Bible for your master." Now what do I say? Well, I say this plan has given us three centuries and more of Protestantism; that is, of revolt—wholesome, half-saving revolt—against Rome. A great gain; for Rome was the wrong master, but not yet what we need. For what we need is not revolt, but obedience, and we cannot well obey a book. A book, then, is not our true master.

Did the leaders of the Reformation make a mistake in giving us their rallying cry, "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible"? I cannot help thinking that they did. The true call was not from the pope to the Bible. It was, so far, a loss—an immense loss—of power, when for a person was substituted a book. Our loyalty, our obedience, moves sluggishly toward a principle, an abstraction. We want a heart for our heart, a mind for our mind, a will for our will. In short, we need a master, and not a code; the lawgiver, and not a law; a Saviour, and not a creed. We needed to go from the wrong person, not to a book, but to the right person; from the pope to the Lord; from Christ's vicar, so called, to Christ.

What the age needs is a master, and that master is Christ.

The Reformation emancipated us. But what we needed was not emancipation. It was change of mastership. We never were made for a state of emancipation. We were made for obedience. What the leaders of the Reformation should have preached was not a crusade of insurrection against the pope. The insurrection was a negative good. It had in it the seeds of positive evil. Those seeds have quickened and borne fruit in sectarianism, formalism, ritualism, skepticism, sentimentalism. Freedom does not name what we needed. We needed freedom in obedience. That is to say, we needed to obey and we should be free. We thought we should be free if we only protested. Nay, but freedom, real freedom, comes by obeying. And freedom is not the thing to be sought. Obedience rather, and then freedom comes without the seeking. The Reformers should have preached a crusade of the new, and the true, obedience. It should have been a fresh proclamation, not of liberty, but of a kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. The true gospel was always a gospel of the kingdom. That is, as I translate, the "good news that God would reign," which means, on our part, that we should be loyal subjects of the Divine kingdom; in one word, obey. Obedience forever—that is our duty and our safety.

"The right of private judgment"; it was a good phrase. Rather, it was an effective phrase. A good phrase it was not. It roused free hearts like

a trumpet, but it roused them to a kind of spiritual sedition. It rallied to a standard of revolt, but there should have been unrolled a standard of allegiance. What men needed to hear was not the rallying cry for a "right." They needed to hear the solemn summons to a duty. Duty is a sobering word. "Rights" is a sound that stirs, but that maddens. The logical end of it is free religion, if even that be indeed the end. There is no logical end of duty, if the duty be rightly understood as obedience, obedience rendered to Christ; no logical end of it but the new heavens and the new earth. It is the kingdom of God fully come. It is salvation completely realized.

Christ, then, is what we need; but not Christ as saviour, not Christ as teacher, not Christ as example, much less Christ as friend, as sympathizer, as elder brother. Christ as all these we need, it is true, but not chiefly; nor even Christ as God manifest in the flesh, though God so manifest he is. We need first of all, and last of all, and most of all, Christ as Master. Not Christ to trust, not Christ to believe, not Christ to follow; no, nor Christ to love, to draw comfort from, to be companion with; not Christ to worship and adore. We need Christ to obey. This, exactly this, nothing else, is our great need. The age is beside itself with this need and does not know it. It needs a master and wants none. It loves freedom and it hates bondage; but it loves a freedom that is bondage, and it hates a bondage that is freedom.

The cure of all, the health, the salvation, the life, is obedience to Christ. Such is the writer's vivid conviction. It is in the spirit of this vivid conviction, and not in any spirit of hidebound adhesion to literalism, to dogma, or to sect, that the foregoing pages have been written. In all loyalty they are now dedicated to those, be they many or be they few, who can read them, and who will, responsively, in the same spirit.



COMMENDATIONS

From among the many commendations of this work when first issued, we select the following :

The "Examiner" (New York) says :

"It will extort from candid readers of other denominations a new respect for Baptist principles, and for our Christian firmness in holding to them. And it may help some of our weaker brethren, who have been tending to laxity in faith or practice, to rest calmly on God's word, and hold fast to his ordinances, careless of human censure. The volume lifts one into a bracing atmosphere."

MR. SPURGEON (in "The Sword and the Trowel") says :

"He has produced a work, every line of which shows careful, exact, conscientious thinking. He expresses his arguments in language clear, subtle, philosophical. It is quite a mental treat and a healthy exercise to peruse this book. . . Ought to carry conviction to every unprejudiced mind. . . Here [on the subject of baptism] we have the author at his very best, and we are made to see that great minds can always add something to this most ancient controversy. The second part of the book advocates, calmly and courteously, the custom of close communion, and though he has not convinced us on the subject, we cannot but admit that he has said the best that can be said, and in the best way, on his side of the question."

"The Religious Herald" says :

"It has been many a day since our eyes rested upon pages that pleased us more than do these. It is a book for the million."

WILLIAM C. CONANT (Congregationalist), in the "Vidi" correspondence, says:

"There is positive support and impulse in the unmixed sweetness of spirit with which the nettly topic is pressed and urged so powerfully, as well as in the inextricable poetic flavor, classic grace, and genial humor of the author's style."

"The Standard" (Chicago) says:

"It is brilliant and original in its thought, and the plan of procedure is thoroughly straightforward and independent."

"The Alabama Baptist" says:

"One of the noblest arguments for the principles of Baptists that has ever appeared."

"The Northern Georgian" says:

"A book that will be read with interest by those who have studied the matter all their lives. We commend it especially to young ministers."

"The Baptist Quarterly Review" says:

"All things considered, we regard this as the most satisfactory work upon the subject that has yet been placed before the public."

"The Western Recorder" says:

"He reasons with remarkable closeness, without obscurity, and thus his arguments come with greater force."

HENRY G. WESTON, D. D., President of Crozer Theological Seminary, says:

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“The Baptist Record” says :

“We like to read just such a clear, vigorous book on any subject. It is a good literary tonic.”

“The Baptist Teacher” says :

“It can scarcely fail to carry conviction to any candid mind.”

“Zion’s Advocate” says :

“Exceedingly able.”

“The Arkansas Evangel” says :

“It is the ablest, fairest, and best contribution to Baptist controversial literature we have ever met. If you want to see narrow discriminations fairly made, that turn out great rich results on the subject discussed, and make you feel proud of your principle and your people, just get this book and read it.”

“The Texas Baptist” says :

“It is a refreshing book to read, and eminently suitable for universal circulation.”

“The Watchman” (Boston) says :

“No one familiar with Dr. Wilkinson’s writings need to be told with what keenness of discrimination, and what thoroughness of logic, and what force of expression, with what regard to the demands of Christian feeling, he develops and applies and sends home the ‘principle’ thus stated.”

“The Canadian Baptist” says :

“Probably the ablest polemical work that has ever been written on the Baptist side.”

“The Independent” says :

“Let it be understood that there is in that body of churches [the Baptist] no abler defender of the principle of close communion, or whatever other principle requires their separate sectarian existence.”



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